Ibn ʿArabī

The Seven Days of the Heart

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prayers for the nights and days of the week

translated by
Pablo Beneito and Stephen Hirtenstein

THE SEVEN DAYS OF THE HEART

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THE SEVEN DAYS OF THE HEART

Awrād al-usbūʿ (*Wird*)

Prayers for the Nights and Days of the Week

TRANSLATED AND PRESENTED IN ENGLISH BY
PABLO BENEITO AND STEPHEN HIRTENSTEIN

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And God said, “Let there be light”: and there was light.
And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided
the light from the darkness.
And God called the light Day and the darkness He called Night:
and the evening and the morning were the first day.

(Genesis 1: 3–5)

Indeed your Lord is God who has created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then He settled Himself upon the Throne. He makes the night cover the day, pursuing it swiftly; and the sun, the moon and the stars, subservient by His Command. Does not the creation and the command belong to Him? Blessed be God, Lord of all beings!

(Quran 7: 54)

The son of Adam wrongs me when he curses the time, for I am Time. In My Hand is the Order. I cause the night and day to turn, one upon the other.

(Hadith)

Between Adhriʿāt and Buṣrā a maid of fourteen rose to my sight
like a full moon.
She was exalted in majesty above time and transcended it in pride
and glory.

(*Tarjumān al-ashwāq* XL: 1–2)

Contents

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SH

Abbreviations

The following works are all cited in the notes to the prayers. Full details can be found in the Bibliography. The Quranic citations (Q.) are based on Arthur Arberry's translation, *The Koran Interpreted*, Oxford, 1964.

***Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* by Ibn ʿArabī**. Arabic edition by A. ʿAfīfī

Fusus *Fusus al-Hikam*, with Ottoman commentary, rendered into English by Bulent Rauf

Bezels *The Bezels of Wisdom*, translated by Ralph Austin

Wisdom *Wisdom of the Prophets*, translated by Angela Culme-Seymour

Fut. *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* by Ibn ʿArabī

JMIAS *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society*, 1984 to present

Kashf *Kashf al-maʿnā* by Ibn ʿArabī

Mishkāt *Mishkāt al-anwār* by Ibn ʿArabī

RG *Répertoire Général des oeuvres d'Ibn ʿArabī*, referring to the numbers given in Osman Yahia's classification of the work of Ibn ʿArabī

SDG *The Self-Disclosure of God*, William Chittick

UM *The Unlimited Mercifier*, Stephen Hirtenstein

Concordance *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane*, edited by A.J. Wensinck

This translation has been based on the printed edition published by the Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society under the title *Wird*, which presents the prayers in both original Arabic script and transliteration. Copies can be obtained from:

The Secretary
Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society
PO Box 892
Oxford OX2 7XL
United Kingdom

email: mias.uk@ibnarabisociety.org

Further information on the Society
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Introduction

1 The Prayers of Ibn ʿArabī

Ibn ʿArabī (1165–1240) has long been known as a great spiritual master. Author of over 350 works, he has exerted an unparalleled influence, not only on his immediate circle of friends and disciples, but on succeeding generations who have taken his teaching as a superlative exposition of Unity (*tawḥīd*). He views the world according to a fundamental harmony, in which all things are intricately interconnected and the human being is given a place of immeasurable dignity. His writings, which were set down in a torrent of inspiration, are living documents, where meanings cascade from the page and no two readings are ever quite the same. Striking to the heart of essential human questions, they illuminate and challenge our view of mankind and the world. His many works of prose and poetry are now becoming more accessible in translation in Western languages, and they possess the remarkable quality of being able to speak to people of all walks of life and belief, across the apparent barrier of many centuries and differing cultures. Despite this growing interest in his works, the prayers which are attributed to him remain little-known. By virtue of their intimate nature, they provide a precious glimpse into the real practice of the spiritual life in the Sufi tradition. This is the first time that any of these prayers have been published in another language, although they have had wide circulation in the Arabic original.

This particular collection of prayers is one of the most celebrated and remarkable. It can be found under many variant titles: "Daily Prayers" (*al-Awrād al-yawmiyya*), "Prayers for the Week" (*Awrād al-usbūʿ*), "Prayers for the Days and Nights" (*Awrād al-ayyām wa'l-layālī*) or simply "Devotional Prayer" (*Wird)*. The term *wird* (pl. *awrād*) is difficult to translate into English: the Arabic root

carries connotations of arriving, reaching, appearing or being received. For the nomads of the desert, the root primarily refers to a watering place or well, where travellers come to drink. In the context of spiritual practice, the term *wird* itself is normally applied to private devotional prayers at specific times of day or night. These are supererogatory acts, in addition to the five prayers prescribed for the Muslim community. They often consist of passages from the Quran or prayers upon the Prophet, which are commonly recited at public gatherings. There are several famous devotional prayers of this kind that have come from spiritual teachers. We may mention the following Maghribi examples by Ibn ʿArabī's contemporaries: the Prayer of ʿAbd al-Salām Ibn Mashīsh (d. 1228), the Prayer of the Sea (*Ḥizb al-baḥr*) of Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Shādhilī (d. 1258), or the less well-known Prayer of Blessing (*al-Ṣalāt al-mubāraka*) of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Mahdawī (d. 1224).

Unlike the above, Ibn ʿArabī's "Prayers for the Week" are neither devotional in any ordinary sense, nor do they appear to be intended as prayers for communal recitation. On the contrary, they seem to be more private and intimate affairs, where the requests imply a high degree of understanding and self-knowledge. In reading them, one is immediately struck by the precision and depth of their formulation, which is consecrated primarily to the clarification and celebration of Union (*tawḥīd*). They are founded upon the detailed exposition of spiritual Union, expressing the most intimate of converse with the Divine Beloved, and situating the one who prays as the true adorer. Here the reciter and the one recited to are understood to be two sides of the same reality. What is recited is that which "arrives in the heart" (*wārid*) and is "received" by the adorer, on the one hand, and the request that reaches the Real (*al-ḥaqq*) and is responded to, on the other. For the one who reads them, these prayers are as much educational as devotional.

2 *The Divine Work: request and response*

> Whosoever is in the heavens and the earth is in request of Him; every day He is at work.[1]

For Ibn ʿArabī, this Quranic verse expresses a central issue of existence. At every moment each being, from the greatest galaxy to the smallest particle, is requesting and receiving its nourishment, physically and spiritually. In his comment on the verse, he remarks:

> The [Divine] work is the request of those who ask. There is not a single existent that is not requesting [of] Him, the Exalted One, but they are according to different degrees in the asking.[2]

Thus the Divine labour consists in constantly fulfilling the requests of created beings, from the highest to the lowest. God's response is as inherently necessary as the asking of the creature. With the injunction: "Call upon Me and I shall answer you",[3] God has promised to respond to the constant request of the creatures, and this in itself is a request:

> He asks the servants to call Him, while the servants ask Him to respond. Thus both are asking and asked for (*ṭālib wa maṭlūb*).[4]

The response is equally mutual:

> Whoever responds when he is called is responded to when he himself calls. He responds when he calls Him, since he has responded to Him, until he actualises the language of the Envoy of God.[5]
>
> If someone responds to the call of God when He calls him by the language of Revealed Law – and He does not call him except through

1. Q. 55:29.
2. *Ayyām al-sha'n*, p. 72. For a résumé of some parts of this work concerning Time, see Appendix A.
3. Q. 40:60.
4. *Fut.* IV: 101.
5. *K. al-ʿAbādilah* 76: 8. See the forthcoming critical edition by Pablo Beneito and Souad Hakim.

> it – God responds to him [favourably] in whatever he has asked for. So tell His faithful servants to "listen to God and His Envoy when they call you …", since neither He, glory to Him, nor His Envoy call you except "towards that which brings you life".[6]

Ultimately in reality, according to Ibn ʿArabī, it is always God Himself who is being asked for, since there is no other than He. However, from a limited point of view this quickly becomes obscured by the innumerable forms of manifestation. Hence there are different degrees of knowledge in the asking. Given that there is always a Divine response to our request, it is essential to become conscious of what is actually being asked for. In a highly illuminating passage, Ibn ʿArabī describes this intimate moment-by-moment consciousness in terms of Divine closeness. After commenting on the Quranic verse, "I am close, I respond to the call of the caller when he calls upon Me",[7] he writes:

> In respect of His attributing to Himself closeness in listening and responding, this is analogous to His describing Himself as being "closer" to man "than his jugular vein".[8] Here He compares His closeness to His servant with the closeness of man to his own self. When man asks himself to do something and then does it, there is no time-gap between the asking and the response, which is simply listening. The moment of asking actually is the very moment of responding. So the closeness of God in responding to His servant is [identical to] the closeness of the servant in responding to his own self. Then [we can say that] what he asks of his self in any state is akin to what he asks of his Lord as a specific need.[9]

The *Awrād* of Ibn ʿArabī are a most wonderful example of the possibility of theophanic prayer. Underlying the specific requests, there is a primary aim: to see things as they are from the perspective of the Real. In this sense, the prayers are equally a form of invocation or remembrance (*dhikr*). In reciting them, the servant is not indulging in mere mechanical repetition, but consciously

6. *K. al-ʿAbādilah* 76:5. The verse quoted is Q.8:24.
7. Q.2:186.
8. Q.50:16.
9. *Fut.* IV:255.

acknowledging the Presence of God, opening up to the full force of the Divine Revelation and savouring its manifold "tastes". This realisation of prayer becomes a mutual remembrance, as God says: "Remember Me, and I shall remember You".[10]

We have chosen to call these prayers "The Seven Days of the Heart" to emphasise the intimacy of this relationship. They are a dialogue with the Unseen, a private communion where only one side of the discourse can be visible. We might compare this to what happens in a telephone conversation: on the one side, we can hear and see the speaker talking into the handset, while the other party remains hidden, invisible and inaudible to any but the person making the call. Likewise, the visible text of the prayers is only one part of the conversation, and their recitation is to be drawn into an intimate dialogue with God Himself, invoking Him and being invoked, inviting Him and being invited. This is a re-turning to Reality, a "conversion" (*tawba*) that requires constant reiteration. All spiritual traditions emphasise that this is not to be achieved through the normal intellectual processes but only in the deepest centre of the self, referred to as the heart (*qalb*). It is the heart which is capable of acting as a mirror to the divine revelation, "turning" or "being turned" (*taqallub*, from the same root as *qalb*) according to the way He makes Himself known. The capacity of the heart to "see" is precisely what transforms prayer from a repetitive act into meaningful conversation.

> Since [prayer] is a secret intimate converse, it is thus an invocation or remembrance (*dhikr*). And whoever remembers God finds himself sitting with God and God sits with him, according to the Divine tradition: "I sit with whosoever remembers Me." Whoever finds himself sitting with the One he remembers, and is capable of inner vision, sees his "sitting-companion". This is witnessing (*mushāhada*) and vision (*ru'ya*). If he does not have this inner capacity, he will not see Him. It is from this actuality or absence of vision in the prayer, that the one who prays will know his own spiritual degree.[11]

10. Q. 2:152.
11. *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Chapter of Muhammad, p. 223; *Wisdom*, p. 128; *Bezels*, p. 280.

3 The three worlds and the three persons

Throughout the prayers there are references to two fundamental aspects of existence: on the one hand, the visible or witnessed (*shuhūd*) realm, the world of Creation (*khalq*) and of the Kingdom (*mulk*); on the other, the invisible or unseen (*ghayb*) realm, the world of Command (*amr*) and of Kingship (*malakūt*).[12] These correspond to "day" and "night", respectively.[13] Between the two realms, in Ibn ʿArabī's teaching, there lies an isthmus (*barzakh*) or threshold which both joins them together and keeps them separate: it is the place where meanings take on form and forms are given meaning. He calls it the world of Compelling Power (*jabarūt*) or Imagination (*khayāl*). It is a realm where the Magnificence of the Divine Presence is witnessed by virtue of inner sight, and where the one who prays is invited for converse. Real prayer takes place in this isthmus between the visible and invisible worlds.

These two realms can equally be viewed as that which is present to us here and now (*shuhūd*), as opposed to that which is absent from us (*ghayb*). Ibn ʿArabī defines the unseen or absent (*ghayb*) as "that of you which God has concealed from you, though not from Himself, and thus it indicates Him". The third person (he) denotes someone who is not here, while the first and second persons (I and you) refer to those present and visible.[14] The contemplation of this distinction opens up a different realm. To enter into converse with God is to step from apparent absence into His Presence. This renders the absent One ("He") into the One present ("You"), so that He may be addressed. At the same time there is always that

12. Although the terms express different relationships, they can be taken as generally synonymous. See *Fut.* II: 129 for the definition of *malakūt* as "the world of meanings and the Unseen" and the *mulk* as "the world of witnessing".

13. See Chapter 69 of the *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, translated by Chittick, *SDG*, pp. 263–5.

14. The Arabic language, unlike English, reflects this polarity of present–absent. In English "I" and "you" do not appear to be semantically related, but there is a clear correlation through the shared letters *alif* and *nūn*, between the Arabic *ana* (I) and *anta*, *anti* (you).

aspect of "Him" which remains unseen and eludes "my" comprehension, for He is too Majestic to be encompassed. Nonetheless, within the ultimate mystery of Union, the "You" who listens is not other than the "I" who speaks. God is thus simultaneously present and absent, I/You and He. As Ibn ʿArabī says: "… and amongst them [the Divine Names and Attributes] are the personal pronouns of the first, second and third persons."[15]

We may speak, in fact, of three worlds, Kingdom (*mulk*), Kingship (*malakūt*) and Compelling Power (*jabarūt*), which in a certain sense correspond to the three persons. From our perspective, the "I" refers to the Kingdom, that which is present to me and as me, while the "He" refers to the Kingship, the realm of the invisible. The "You" is then a bridge between the two, an isthmus, in the same way as the realm of Divine Power (*jabarūt*) separates and unites the two worlds.

"He" (in Arabic *Hū*), the third person singular, denotes "the Unseen which cannot be contemplated. He is neither manifest nor a place of manifestation, but He is the Sought which the tongue seeks to elucidate."[16] It refers directly to the Essence Itself, without in any way qualifying It, even as unqualifiable. Although indicated as "unseen" or "absent", this He-ness or Ipseity (*huwiyya*) runs through everything: "Nothing becomes manifest in the adorer and the adored except His Ipseity … He alone adores and is adored."[17] Many formulations in the *Awrād* are based upon this recognition. For example: "O You, who is the Unlimited 'He', while I am the limited 'He'! O 'He', apart from whom there is no other!"[18]

15. *Fut.* IV: 196. In Arabic the first person is called the "speaker" (*mutakallim*), the third is the "absent" (*ghā'ib*) and the second is the "addressed" (*mukhāṭab*).

16. *Fut.* II: 128.

17. *Fut.* IV: 102. See also *Fut.* II: 529.

18. See Sunday Eve prayer, p. 25. In one astonishing short poem in the *Futūḥāt*, Ibn ʿArabī manages to convey the sheer perplexity of the three persons. See *Fut.* I: 497, translated by R. Austin in *Prayer & Contemplation*, p. 16. See also M. Chodkiewicz, *An Ocean Without Shore*, p. 36.

There are various ways in which God is addressed in the *Awrād*: sometimes as "lord" (*rabb*), sometimes as "master" (*sayyid*), sometimes by a particular Divine Name, whose special quality is thus invoked. By far the most common are *ilāhī* (translated as "O my God") and *allāhumma* ("O God"). These are not simply used for stylistic variation, but are a precise mode of address. The first establishes a relationship between the degree of divinity (*ulūhiyya*) and one over whom divinity is exercised (*ma'lūh*). Like the Name Lord (*rabb*), *ilāh* requires an apparent "other", a creature over whom He can be God (hence the use of "my God"). The Quran, for example, speaks of the "God of mankind" (*ilāh al-nās*). The second, *allāhumma*, is an invocational form of the Name *Allāh*. This denotes the absolute transcendent divinity (*ulūha*), by which none other than He can be qualified. Nor is He to be qualified as the *Allāh* of someone, since the Name *Allāh* unites all the Names and rejects such a specific relationship.[19]

4 The structure of the Awrād

At first sight it might seem as if the prayers have been arranged somewhat simply: fourteen prayers, one for each night and day of the week. Is there perhaps a deeper structure? While there is no explicit explanation as to why the individual prayers have been set out in this way, we can find many clues in other parts of Ibn ʿArabī's work which enable us to discern a most remarkable underlying pattern.

First of all, Ibn ʿArabī considers the weekly cycle as sacred. It is a Divine Sign, which points to the reality of Being. The seven days and nights express aspects of Being or spiritual realities, which, when taken together, form a complete whole and encompass all of existence. As we shall see, the seven days have a subtle relationship with seven prophets.

19. These two modes of address might be compared with the Biblical Hebrew words, *eloha* and *elohim*, which are often translated as "God" and "the Lord God", respectively.

The number 14 itself is charged with significance. In relation to the 28-day lunar cycle, 14 represents the full moon, and is thus a symbol of the most complete beauty, wherein the light of the sun is reflected. It stands for the perfect human soul (*nafs kāmila*), who is fully receptive to the action of the Divine Spirit. In the Arabic language, true beauty is symbolised as "a young maid of fourteen". In his commentary on the fortieth poem of the *Tarjumān al-ashwāq*, Ibn ʿArabī explains another meaning in attributing 14 to a young woman: "The attribute of perfection is related to her, so the most perfect of the numbers is given to her, which is the number 4, and that is also 10 (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10). From it comes 14 (4 + 10). The number 4 thus contains 3 and 2 and 1, as well as also containing the number 10."[20] In mathematical terms, the numbers 4 and 14 are both divisors of 28, which was known to the Greeks as the second perfect number (being the sum of its divisors: 1 + 2 + 4 + 7 + 14).

We may also view 14 as a doubling of 7: this recalls the 7 verses of the Fātiḥa which are known as the "seven repeated" (*sabʿ mathānī*), or the seven heavens and seven earths of Islamic cosmology, which include all the worlds of manifestation from the highest to the lowest. The number 7 itself underpins a major part of Ibn ʿArabī's teaching and can be found in texts relating to the spiritual ascension, the spiritual "climes" or regions and to the human faculties.

5 The seven days and seven nights

The seven days of the week are an ancient symbol of the complete cycle of creation. In both the Biblical and Quranic accounts there are six days of Divine action followed by one day of repose and rest. The association of the seven days with the seven major planets of our solar system has permeated Western languages. Whilst Hebrew

20. *Dhakhāʾir al-aʿlāq*, p. 443. He is alluding also to the Pythagorean doctrine of the tetraktys or tetrahedron: this is the first three-dimensional form which fits perfectly within a sphere, its 4 faces, 6 edges and 4 vertices making a sum of 14. The Pythagoreans specifically associated the number 4 with harmony.

and Arabic have retained a basic numerical system, European languages have called each day directly after a planet:

	Planet	English	Latin language (Fr/Sp)	Arabic	Prophet according to Ibn ʿArabī
1	SUN	Sunday	dimanche domingo	*yawm al-aḥad*	IDRIS
2	MOON	Monday	lundi lunes	*yawm al-ithnayn*	ADAM
3	MARS	Tuesday	mardi martes	*yawm al-thulāthā'*	AARON & JOHN
4	MERCURY	Wednesday	mercredi miércoles	*yawm al-arbiʿā'*	JESUS
5	JUPITER	Thursday	jeudi jueves	*yawm al-khamīs*	MOSES
6	VENUS	Friday	vendredi viernes	*yawm al-jumuʿa*	JOSEPH
7	SATURN	Saturday	samedi sábado	*yawm al-sabt*	ABRAHAM

The long-standing association of prophets to planets is here extended to the days of the week. Thus, for Ibn ʿArabī there are two cycles involving the seven prophets (or eight if we include John): the order of the planets in the physical universe, and their order in terms of days of the week. Whether he is considering

physical space or temporal space, Ibn ʿArabī views these role-models of mankind as spiritual realities who give meaning to both dimensions.

The spiritual dimension of the physical order is shown in the tradition of Muhammad's night-journey (*isrāʾ*) or heavenly ascension (*miʿrāj*): when he ascended through the seven heavens, he passed through each sphere and there met the prophet appropriate to it. This bodily journey of the Prophet is re-enacted spiritually by the saints. In no less than four separate works, Ibn ʿArabī speaks of the way that he himself experienced the night-journey, in more or less autobiographical detail, and it is clear that it forms one of the cornerstones of his teaching.[21]

Likewise, there is a spiritual dimension to the days of the week, similarly linked to the same seven prophets. These spiritual days, Ibn ʿArabī says, are "times" in which we receive spiritual knowledge, contemplations and mysteries, just like the body receives its nourishment during the day. In several works he specifically mentions this inner dimension to the weekly cycle. The following passage from his *Mawāqiʿ al-nujūm*, composed in 595/1199 within a year of his great ascension in Fez, describes how "one who has a heart" may be given knowledge of spiritual secrets:

> Know, my son, that for every day [of the week] there is a prophet from among the prophets, from whom descends a secret upon the heart of the verifying witness, a secret in which he takes delight during his day and by which he knows something of that which requires to be known. This only happens to those who possess a heart.
>
> Now on the first day [Sunday] it is Idris [Enoch] who addresses him with a secret revealing to him the causes of things before the existence of their effects. On Monday it is Adam who addresses him

21. The first experience of heavenly ascension (*miʿrāj*) of which Ibn ʿArabī provides an account took place in AH 594 in Fez. Detailed accounts appear in *K. al-Isrāʾ*, written soon afterwards, *Tanazzulāt al-Mawṣiliyya* (written in AH 601), *R. al-Anwār* (written in AH 602) and of course the *Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, chapters 167 and 367 (written over a period of many years). Further research on the relationship of the days, prophets, Divine Names and letters would need to take into consideration all these books. See *UM*, pp.115–23.

> with a secret by which he comes to know the reasons why the stations wax or wane with respect to the seekers, and how God reveals Himself. On Tuesday it is either Aaron or John who addresses him with a secret by which he comes to know what is beneficial or harmful about the influences that come upon him from the world of the Unseen. On Wednesday it is Jesus who addresses him with a secret by which he comes to know the completion of the stations, how they are sealed and by whom. On Thursday it is Moses who addresses him with a secret by which he comes to know the religious prescriptions and the mysteries of intimate converse. On Friday it is Joseph who addresses him with a secret by which he comes to know the mysteries of constant ascension through the stations, the [Divine] decree and where it is established. And on Saturday it is Abraham who addresses him with a secret whereby he comes to know how to deal with enemies and when they are to be fought against, and this is the presence of the Substitutes (*abdāl*).[22]

Sunday (the "first day" or the "day of the One, *al-Aḥad*") is coupled with Idris, who is associated with the Sun. Just as the Sun is the fourth heaven and the centre of the seven planets in physical space, so the secrets that Idris reveals, namely "the causes of things before the existence of their effects", shows his privileged position as the heavenly Pole (*quṭb*).[23] At the same time, here we find him as the beginning of the cycle, the "founder of wisdoms" as he is called in the *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, with a strong association with the principle of *aḥadiyya* (uniqueness). There are several relevant passages in Ibn ʿArabī's work,[24] especially those that discuss the knowledge of unity (*tawḥīd*).[25] However, to avoid any kind of fixity, Ibn ʿArabī

22. *Mawāqiʿ al-nujūm*, p.157.

23. In the *R. al-Anwār*, Ibn ʿArabī writes of this degree that in it "you are given the power of symbols and a view of the whole, and authority over the veil and the unveiling" (see *Journey to the Lord of Power*, p. 43).

24. See, for example, *Fut.* I: 152–7 and III: 348–9; *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, pp. 75–80 (*Wisdom*, pp. 35–9; *Bezels*, pp. 82–9); or *Tanazzulāt al-Mawṣiliyya*, pp. 112ff. Compare also *Fut.* II: 421–56 on the *tawajjuhāt al-asmā'*.

25. As Idris explained to Ibn ʿArabī during his spiritual ascension: "I was a prophet calling them to the word of *tawḥīd*, not to *tawḥīd* itself, for no-one has ever denied *tawḥīd*" (*Fut.* III: 348).

also specifies that these are not the only mysteries revealed by each prophet, merely the first.

In his book on the meaning of the Seal of the Saints, the *ʿAnqāʾ Mughrib*, composed in the same period as the *Mawāqiʿ al-nujūm*, we find him explicitly reiterating this prophetic correlation:

> If your day is Sunday, then Idris is your Companion, so bother not with anyone! And if it is Monday, then Adam is your Companion in the interval of the two worlds. If your day is Tuesday, then Aaron is your Companion, so adhere to Right Guidance; and John [the Baptist] will be your Intimate, so cleave to Purity and Contentment. If it is Wednesday, Jesus is your Companion, so hold fast to the holy life and persevere in the desert. If it is Thursday, then it is Moses: for the covering is quite lifted away, and you are addressed in the manner of an Unveiling, not [by] any man or fire; and indeed, the Angel rejoiced [at the mention of God's Name], while the Devil withdrew. And if your day is Friday, then Joseph, possessor of the qualities of the passionately beloved, is your Companion; while if your day is Saturday, then it is Abraham, so hasten to the honouring of your Guest before [He] vanishes. These are the Days of the Gnostics (*ayyām al-ʿārifīn*) and the radiant stars of the Spheres of the Wayfarers![26]

Ibn ʿArabī attaches particular importance to Wednesday, the fourth of the seven days.[27] He views it as the day of Light (*nūr*) and the centre of the week, just as the Sun occupies the central fourth position amongst the physical planets. As Wednesday is the day of Jesus, it equally alludes to his central position in Time, as the Seal of Universal Sainthood. There are indications of the importance of this prophetic principle throughout the day-prayers of the *Awrād*. The most evident is in the marginal note on the prayer for Tuesday Morning. Two awesome men appeared and one of them gave Ibn ʿArabī this prayer to recite. Although there is no explicit mention of who these men were, we may perhaps identify them as the prophets associated with Tuesday, Aaron and

26. *ʿAnqāʾ Mughrib*, translated by G. Elmore as *Islamic Sainthood in the Fullness of Time*, pp. 439–41.

27. It is the only day in which all the spiritual realities of the spheres take part. See Appendix B.

John.[28] In addition, in his *Ayyām al-sha'n*, Ibn ʿArabī outlines a more complex relationship between these seven prophets and each day (see Appendix B).

In the Judaic and Islamic traditions each day begins not at sunrise but at sunset. The precedence of the night is already attested in the fifth verse of Genesis, when the first "day" of creation is being described: "And God called the light Day and the darkness He called Night: and the evening and the morning were the first day." With the introduction of clock-time and its rigorous division of days beginning at midnight, this natural rhythm is no longer so evident, let alone the basis of our everyday cycle of living.

The night is associated by Ibn ʿArabī with the world of the Unseen (*ghayb*), in which the soul appears in its true condition, a moon reflecting the pure light of the Divine Spirit. While the days belong to the prophets, the nights correspond to the saints (*awliyā'*). The contemplative knowledge that underpins all others in Ibn ʿArabī's teaching, and is the prerogative of the saints, is the science of the letters.[29] It is therefore not surprising that the key to understanding the structure of the eve-prayers should lie in the Arabic alphabet.

In a little-known work attributed to Ibn ʿArabī, entitled *Tawajjuhāt al-ḥurūf*, a prayer is ascribed to each of the letters of the alphabet. The text begins with the letter *alif* and ends with the double letter *lām–alif*, making a cycle of twenty-nine rather than the standard twenty-eight. Perhaps this was conceived as a cycle that begins and ends in the same place, the *alif* representing the Essence Itself. The composition of letter-prayers is not without precedent: in the Biblical Psalms we can find one (No. 119) containing twenty-two prayers, each of which is dedicated to one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Each line and the key terms of the prayer begin with the letter concerned. In the *Tawajjuhāt*, there is also a strong emphasis on the use of the letter in the prayer – for

28. See Notes to Tuesday Morning prayer, p. 83.
29. See *K. al-Mīm wa-l-wāw wa-l-nūn*, *Rasā'il*, p. 2.

example, we can find over seventy uses of the letter *qāf* in the space of a few lines. It is not only the physical articulation of the letter that is important: Ibn ʿArabī establishes a connection between the twenty-eight Arabic letters and the twenty-eight days of the lunar cycle, where each letter has a particular "temper" and principial meaning in terms of the whole cosmological cycle.[30]

In the *Awrād*, fourteen of these prayers from the *Tawajjuhāt* have been combined to make seven "doubled" prayers. Each eve-prayer of the *Awrād* is thus composed of two letter-prayers, with Quranic verses joining them together. Is there an underlying order? Are the letter-combinations based upon sound? Or is there some other factor determining the selection? The key may be found in the correspondence between letters and numerical values, commonly known as the *abjad* system (see Appendix C). The chart below explains the combinations by laying out the letters and their values on a seven-by-four grid (according to the Eastern *abjad* system):

1 *alif*	2 *bā'*	3 *jīm*	4 *dāl*	5 *hā'*	6 *wāw*	7 *zāy*
8 *ḥā'*	9 *ṭā'*	10 *yā'*	20 *kāf*	30 *lām*	40 *mīm*	50 *nūn*
60 *sīn*	70 *ʿayn*	80 *fā'*	90 *ṣād*	100 *qāf*	200 *rā'*	300 *shīn*
400 *tā'*	500 *thā'*	600 *khā'*	700 *dhāl*	800 *ḍād*	900 *ẓā'*	1000 *ghayn*

By treating each column as relating to one of the seven days, we then find the following letter combinations that have been used for the eve-prayers:

30. See the chart drawn up by Titus Burckhardt in *Mystical Astrology according to Ibn ʿArabī*, pp. 32–3. This is taken from *Fut.* II: 421–56 on the *Tawajjuhāt al-asmā'*.

Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues
alif	*bā'*	*jīm*	*dāl*	*hā'*	*wāw*	*shīn*
sīn	*thā'*	*khā'*	*ṣād*	*qaf*	*rā'*	*ghayn*

It might appear odd that only fourteen letters have been used and that the weekly cycle starts here on a Wednesday Eve. Why weren't all four letter-prayers used? Why don't the eve-prayers begin on Sunday Eve, like the day-prayers? We may find a key to this by considering the pattern of the week and the importance of letter symbolism.

If we begin the week in the usual way with Sunday, we find the letter *alif* at the heart of the week on the fourth day, with three days on either side. Ibn ʿArabī considers the *alif* to be the letter that denotes the Divine Essence, as the centre or the "heart" of all things. This is due to its graphic form (as a straight vertical line, free from curvature and detached from other letters), its numerical value (= 1), and the fact that it is the first letter of the alphabet. In addition, we can see an important numerical pattern: 6 letters are related to the first 3 days (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday), and another 6 to the last 3 (Thursday, Friday, Saturday). As the number 6 is equal to the letter *wāw*, the whole week can thus be read as *w* (*wāw*) + *ā* (*alif*) + *w* (*wāw*), which spells the name of the final sounded letter of the alphabet, *wāw*. Even the extra letter on Wednesday, *sīn*, has a value of 60, or 6 in the tens column. By reducing the number to units, it becomes 6, which again equates to *wāw*. In Ibn ʿArabī's doctrine, the *wāw* alludes to the final degree of existence, the Perfect Man, in whom all the preceding 27 degrees of existence are collected together and summarised. (For further explanation of the *alif* and *wāw*, see Appendix D.) Other aspects of these letters may also be observed: for example, the range of letters extends from *alif* (1, representing the Essence) to ghayn (1,000, representing multiplicity).[31]

We can summarise the internal structure of the prayers in the following table:

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Eve	*hā'/ qāf*	*wāw/ rā'*	*shīn/ ghayn*	*alif/ sīn*	*bā'/ thā'*	*jīm/ khā'*	*dāl/ ṣād*
Day	Idris	Adam	Aaron/ John	Jesus	Moses	Joseph	Abraham

From this table we may also observe the fact that Wednesday is not only associated with the letter *alif*, but is also the day of Jesus. His position at the centre of the temporal cycle parallels the position of Idris at the centre of the physical spheres.

6 The day of Muhammad

One fundamental question remains. If each day is associated with one of the seven prophets, what role does the Prophet Muhammad play? Is he specifically related here to any of the days of the week? The answer can be found at the beginning of a short work entitled *Ayyām al-sha'n*:

> May the blessing of God be upon the one whose day is the known day (*al-maʿrūf*), whose day in terms of visible effect is Tuesday and in terms of essential speciality is Friday. His subtleties permeate every day, and his realities suffuse every hour.[32]

31. In terms of their numerical values (see Appendix C), these letter-combinations are also highly significant. Using the so-called minor *abjad* system (which reduces all numbers to units), we find the following:

(Wed) 1 + 6 = 7; (Thur) 2 + 5 = 7; (Fri) 3 + 6 = 9; (Sat) 4 + 9 = 13 = 4; (Sun) 5 + 1 = 6; (Mon) 6 + 2 = 8; (Tue) 3 + 1 = 4.

If the totals are added together, the sum is 45, which is the numerical value of the name Adam (1 + 4 + 40). This number Ibn ʿArabī uses to allude to the perfection of the Adamic Divine form and the sciences which He taught Adam in the following passage: "The matrices of the knowledge of God (*ummuhāt al-ʿilm billāh*), insofar as He is independent of the worlds, are 45 sciences" (*K. al-Ifāda*, Manisa 1183 fol.114a).

32. *Ayyām al-sha'n*, p. 1. Using the minor *abjad* system of numerical values, we find that both Tuesday and Friday have a particular correspondence with the number 3:

There are here three ways of seeing the "day" of Muhammad. The first refers to the "known" (*maʿrūf*) or universal day, without any differentiation, the unit that constitutes "every day". Muhammad's reality is not related to a specific day because he is considered the all-embracing principle. His day is the very unit of "day", at whatever level it may be considered, as the minute, the hour or the week itself.[33] On the other hand, the particular days of Tuesday and Friday can be related to the Prophet in a certain manner. Tuesday, the third day, expresses the principles of the number 3, the first of the odd or singular numbers, and the connection between the Prophet and singularity is brought out in the Chapter of Muhammad in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*:

> His wisdom is singularity (*fardiyya*), because he was the most complete existent in this humankind, and thus the Order begins with him and ends with him. For he was a prophet while Adam was still between water and clay, while on the other hand, in his elemental, earthly existence, he was the Seal of the Prophets. The first of the singular numbers is three, from which all the other singular numbers are derived. So he was the greatest symbol of his Lord, as he was given the all-inclusive totality of the Words (*jawāmiʿ al-kalim*), which are the contents of the Names [which God taught to] Adam.[34]

Friday (*yawm al-jumuʿa*, literally the day of gathering-together), clearly expresses the principle of synthesis (*jamʿ*). Muhammad is the Seal who synthesises all the messages of previous prophets, and the model of human perfection who unites all the modalities of perfection within himself.

Sunday, Monday, Tuesday (*qāf*/1, *rā'*/2, *shīn*/3); and Wednesday, Thursday, Friday (*alif*/1, *bā'*/2, *jīm*/3).

33. Ibn ʿArabī is specific about this at the beginning of the *Ayyām al-sha'n*: "I have called this book the *Ayyām al-sha'n*, as it is whatever happens in the smallest day of the cosmos in terms of divine effects and enactments, in composition and decomposition, ascent and descent, visible and invisible existence. He, exalted may He be, referred to this 'small day' as the day which is universally known, using an all-embracing expression so that those addressed might understand, for He said: 'Whosoever is in the heavens and the earth is in request of Him; every day He is at work'" (Q. 55:29).

34. *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, p. 214 (*Wisdom*, p. 116; *Bezels*, p. 272).

If the eve-prayers of the *Awrād* have been coded to spell *wāw*, the letter-name of the Perfect Man, we could also consider the seven prophets of the day-prayers as manifestations or modalities of this same Man. This deeper structure, a network of letters and prophetic figures pointing to the Muhammadian perfection, seems entirely deliberate, although some questions still remain. Do the two letters for each eve-prayer have some special affinity or connection with each other within the text of the prayer itself?[35] Could there be a particular correlation between them and the prophet of the day? Perhaps, although all this would be a matter for contemplation rather than speculation.

7 *The Awrād: manuscripts and translation*

There are numerous manuscripts of the prayers, reflecting the fact that they have been revered and well-known throughout the Islamic world for centuries. Osman Yahia in his *Classification* has listed almost forty manuscripts (RG 64), although this may in fact represent only a small fraction of the total that survive. Some others are listed under different titles (for example, RG 16a), or are to be found in library collections that Yahia did not consult. Perhaps others are still in private hands. Of the manuscripts we know at present, none have been found to date back further than the early twelfth century of the Hegira, a period of some 300 years ago. We have utilised several, including one that indicates a direct connection to Ibn ʿArabī himself, and the text itself seems to us to be complete. A critical edition would require further research, which in the absence of older copies would not guarantee greater reliability.

It must be emphasised that the Arabic text is extraordinarily full and poetic: an interweaving of rhyme and rhythm which seems to have been inspired by the prose of the Quran and cannot be

35. For example, we may observe that the two letters for Sunday Eve, *hāʾ* and *qāf*, may be combined to produce the word *qahr* (subjugation or overpowering), which features prominently in the text of this prayer. On Monday Eve, *wāw* and *rāʾ* may be combined to produce *rūḥ* (spirit) or *rawḥ* (joy).

conveyed in translation. There is also a richness of allusion to the Quran and Hadith that is staggering, and we have indicated the many references by using italics in the text and providing fuller quotations in the notes. We have used Arberry's famous translation of the Quran as a basis, but have had to adapt it to the context, because of the way that Ibn ʿArabī draws on the implied meanings of the Arabic language.

As in the case of the Quran, there can be no substitute for the rich sounds and meanings of the original language, no translation that can stand in place of reciting the Arabic. The sheer beauty of the original, its elegance of style, the lexical interconnections that Ibn ʿArabī weaves, the sublimity of the knowledge implied – all these establish the *Awrād* as a unique spiritual masterpiece. Above all else they are prayers, whether they be understood in the sense of acts of devotion that can be performed before or after other actions, or seen as the unceasing prayer of the heart in contemplation. They appear as the natural expression of a heart completely given up to God. They explicitly and implicitly refer to the true reality of Man, created in the Divine Likeness, who recognises his Origin and acts in total conscious conformity to his Lord, thus realising pure servanthood. This constitutes the true imitation of the Prophet:

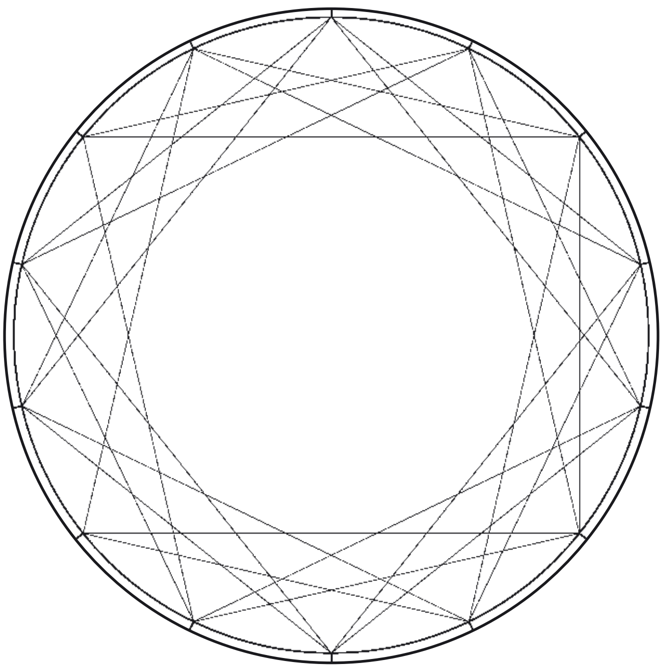
> As he [Muhammad] was by origin created a pure servant, he never lifted his head to make himself a master, but continued prostrating and standing [before Him], in the condition of [total] receptivity, until God brought forth from him that which He brought forth.[36]

For many centuries these prayers have been taken, and are still taken, as recitation by men and women throughout the world in a litany of praise. As a friend has remarked, they teach us to talk to God in the best of ways, for this is not something we automatically know how to do. We can only trust that the following rendering into English may convey to the non-Arabic speaker and modern reader something of their magnificent and beautiful power.

36. *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, p. 220 (*Wisdom*, p. 124; *Bezels*, p. 278).

THE PRAYERS

TRANSLATION AND NOTES



The Opening Prayer

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE AND MOST MERCIFUL

Praise be to God for His bringing the most
excellent success! I ask Him for:

guidance to follow His Path;

inspiration to verify His Reality;

a heart certain of His Truth;

a mind illumined by the providential
awareness of His Precedence;

a spirit taken up with ardent desire of Him;

a *soul at peace* from ignorance;

an understanding radiating with the flashes
of thought and its brilliance;

an innermost heart flourishing with the
spring-waters of illumination and its pure *nectar*;

speech strewn upon the carpet of expansion
and its clarification;

thought exalted above the apparent finery
of the ephemeral and its embellishment;

insight able to witness the secret mystery of Being
in the setting of creation and its rising;

senses maintained in full health by the constant
coursing of [Divine] refreshment;

a natural constitution purified from the dominion of lack and its consequences;

a disposition completely responsive to the reins of Divine Law and its authority;

a [state at each] instant conducive to His uniting and His distinguishing.

And may blessings and peace be upon Muhammad and his family and his company, and the successors who came after him and the community of those who follow his path – may they be greeted with peace.

The One desired is God, both in Being and in witnessing, and He is the One intended, without any [possibility of] denial or disclaimer. For *He suffices me, the most beneficent Trustee*.

Sunday Eve Prayer

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE AND MOST MERCIFUL

O my God, You are the One who encompasses what is unseen by every seer, and the One who occupies and holds sway over the interior of every exterior. I ask of You by the light of Your Face, before which all foreheads prostrate, to which *all faces submit*, and by Your Light at which *all eyes gaze*, that You guide me on Your private path, turning my face to You away from whatever is other than You.

O You who is the Unlimited "He", while I am the limited "He"! O "He", apart from whom there is no other!

O my God, it is Your business to vanquish enemies and quell oppressors. I ask of You full backing from Your Exalted Might, that it may protect me from all that wish me ill, so that I can thereby *restrain the claws* of the covetous and *cut off the last remnant of the wrongdoers*. Grant me possession of my self, as a dominion which sanctifies me from every disfiguring characteristic; and guide me to You, O Guide, for it is to You that all things return.

You *encompass all things. He has Supreme Power over His servants and He is the Wise*, *the Fully Aware*.

O my God, You are the Existent, *standing over every soul*, and the Self-Standing, subsisting in every meaning and every perception. You possess [all] Power, so You subjugate, and You possess [all] Knowledge, so You foreordain. To You belongs Ordaining Power and Subjugating Might, and in Your Hands are *the Creation and the Command*. You are with each thing, in the closest proximity, and You are its Master; by encompassing it You are its Director and its Guide.

O my God, I ask of You full backing from Your Subjugating Names, that You may thereby strengthen all my faculties of heart and soul, so that no possessor of a heart comes into direct contact with me without being *turned back upon their heels* [and rendered] powerless.

I ask of You, O my God, an eloquent tongue and truthful speech; appropriate understanding and an innermost centre of taste; a truly receptive heart and a discerning mind; radiant thought and insatiable yearning; eyes that are lowered [before You] and a burning desire. Grant me a hand of [total] empowerment and a strength that brooks no resistance; a *soul at peace* and supple limbs for obeying You. Purify me that I may come to You, and grant that I may be brought before You.

O my God, gift me with a heart by which I may be devoted to You in utter poverty, led by yearning and driven by desire, [a heart] whose provision is fear [of You] and whose companion is restlessness, whose aim is [Your] closeness and acceptance! In Your Nearness lies the consummation of those who aim, and the fulfilment of the desire of those who search.

O my God, bestow upon me the presence of tranquillity and dignity. Keep me from self-aggrandisement and haughtiness. Let me stand in the station of being accepted as Your delegate, and may my words meet with positive response.

O my Lord, bring me close to You with the closeness of those who truly know [You]. Purify me from the attachments of the natural constitution. Eliminate the blood-clot of blameworthiness from my heart, that I may be one of the completely purified ones.

May God's blessing be upon our master Muhammad, and upon all his family and companions. *And praise be to God, Lord of the universes*.

Sunday Morning Prayer

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE AND MOST MERCIFUL

In the Name of God, the opener of existence!

Praise be to God, the manifester of every existent!

There is no god but God, the absolute Unity far beyond any unveiling or contemplation!

God is greater, from Him the order originates and to Him it returns!

Glory be to God, there is none other than Him to be contemplated! There is none with Him but Him to be worshipped!

One, Unique, He *is as He has [always] been* before the letters of limitation!

He has in every thing a Sign, pointing to the fact that He is One Existent.

His mystery is His being veiled from all perception or penetration!

There is no power nor strength save through God, *the Most High*, *the Most Magnificent*, a treasure with which He has specially favoured us, from among the treasures of the Unseen in all Its Generosity. By it may I call upon all good to descend, by it may I repel all evil and harm, and by it may I unstitch all that which is sewn up and closed off!

Indeed we belong to God and indeed we return to Him in all that has descended or is descending, in every state and station, in every thought and inspiration, and in all that arises from the interior or is received from the exterior.

God is the One wished for every thing, and in every thing He is the One hoped for and intended!

Inspiration and understanding come from Him, and that which is found to be is Him, without any [possibility of] denial or disclaimer.

When He unveils, there is no other. When He veils, all is other, and each one is a concealed adored.

[He is] Inward in Uniqueness and Outward in Oneness. From Him and through Him is the existence of everything, so there is no thing. If there is a thing, in reality it is devoid and bereft of existence.

For He is the First and the Last, the Outwardly Manifest and the Inwardly Hidden, and He is Knower and Known of every thing, before the existence of any thing and after its existence.

To Him belongs the all-embracing Grasp, the unifying Reality and the eternally subsistent Mystery, the permanent Sovereignty and the inherent Authority! Deserving of all praise and glorification, He is *such that He extols Himself*, for He is both Praiser and Praised.

[He is] Unique of Essence, One in [all] Names and Qualities! Knowledgeable of all universals and particulars! Encompassing of all that is above and all that is below! It is before Him that *the faces bow* from all directions!

O God, O You who are the all-englobing Encompasser, who cannot be prevented from effusing gifts! O You whose treasuries are never exhausted, and whose generosity and support to the whole of creation is unfailingly extended!

O God, open for me the locks of these treasures; unveil for me the realities of these symbols. Be the One who faces me and my facing. By vision of You veil me from vision of me! By the manifestation of Your Self-revelation efface all my attributes,

so that I have no orientation except towards You, so that my eyes alight upon none but You!

O God, look upon me with the eye of compassion and concern, of safeguarding and safekeeping, of election and direction, in every circumstance, so that nothing veils me from my vision of You and that I may look upon You through what You have accorded me of Your regard in everything. Render me completely conforming to Your Self-revelation, completely suitable to Your election and direction, place of Your regard in Your creation and channel for the effusion of Your gifts and favours towards them.

O You to whom belongs absolute Richness beyond need, whilst His servants possess [only] poverty beyond question!

O You who is Rich beyond need of anything, whilst each thing is in need of Him!

O You in whose hand lies the destiny of everything and to whom everything returns!

O You who possesses absolute Being, such that none knows what He truly is except Him, and none can be informed of Him except through His Guidance!

O You who commands that righteous actions be subject to the servant, so that all their benefit accrues to him! I have no goal other than You, and nothing suffices me except Your generosity and Your goodness.

O You who bestows most generously far in excess of any desire! O You who bestows favours before any asking! O You before whom the intellect of every petitioner stops short! O You who is all-powerful in His Command and all-triumphant! O You who gives freely to everything, but if He so wishes may deprive! I strive towards You requesting, that I may find myself to be servant to You in every state. Direct me, my Master – indeed that is Your prerogative rather than mine.

How am I to aspire to You when You are behind every aspiration? How am I to seek You when seeking [itself] signifies being distanced? Can One who is ever-close, ever-present, be sought? Can One for whom aspiration implies being lost and confused be aspired to? Seeking does not reach You; aspiring does not apply to You.

The revelations of Your Exteriorising cannot be caught hold of or grasped; the enigmas of Your Mysteries cannot be unravelled or undone. Is the one who is given existence capable of knowing the true nature of One who has bestowed existence on him? Is the one who is servant capable of attaining the reality of One who has subjected him to servanthood?

Seeking and aspiring, nearness and farness, these are [all] qualities of the servant: so what can the servant attain through his own qualities with respect to One who is Incomparable and Transcendent in His Essence? The [true] place of every creature is [total] incapacity, standing in true humility before the door of Exalted Glory, without any ability to grasp this Treasure.

How can I know You when You are the Inwardly Hidden who is not known?

How can I not know You when You are the Outwardly Manifest, making Yourself known to me in every thing?

How can I realise Your Unity when in Uniqueness I have no existence?

How can I not realise Your Unity when Union is the very secret of servanthood?

Glory be to You! There is no god but You! No-one but You can realise Your Unity, for You are as You are in pre-eternity without beginning and post-eternity without end. In reality, no other than You can realise Your Unity, and in sum, none knows You except You.

You hide and You manifest – yet You do not hide from Yourself nor do You manifest to other than Yourself, for You are You. There is no god but You. How is this paradox to be resolved, when the First is Last and the Last is First? O You who causes the order to be ambiguous and the secret to be hidden, and plunges [other] into perplexity when [really] there is no other than He!

I ask of You, O God, that You unveil for me the mystery of Unity, that I may verify true servanthood and that I may fully accomplish the service of Your Lordship, according to what is suitable to its highest presence. For I am in existence only through You, being of ephemera and of non-existence, while You are Existent, Permanent, Living, Self-Subsisting, Ancient of Days, Eternal, Knower and Known. O You, whom none knows what He truly is except Him!

I ask of You, O God, that I may flee from me to You and that my whole totality may be integrated in You, so that [the sense of] my existence ceases to veil me from my witnessing. O You who are my aim and aspiration, O You whom I worship and adore! Nothing is lost to me when I have found You! Nothing is unknown to me when I have known You! Nothing is missing for me when I have witnessed You! My annihilation is in You; my subsistence is through You; and You are the object of my contemplation. There is no god but You, as You have attested, as You have known and as You have ordered.

My witnessing is my very existence, and I have not witnessed aught but me in my annihilation and my subsistence. The allusion is to me; the judgement is both for me and against me; the attribution is my attribution; all that defines my rank. The [whole] affair is [truly] my affair, in manifestation and in non-manifestation, and in the permeating of the guarded Secret: Ipseity that pervades unseen, and places of manifestation that render visible, being and not-being, light and dark, pen and tablet, hearing and not-hearing, knowing and not-knowing,

peace and war, silence and speech, separating and restoring, essential Truth and immediate Truth, concealment of interior eternity and permanence of exterior everlastingness.

Say: He is God, Unique,
God, the Universal Support and Refuge,
He does not beget nor is He begotten,
And there is no single one like Him.

May the blessing of God be upon the one who is first in coming into existence and first in Existence; the one who opens up for every witnesser [access to] the two presences of witness and witnessed; the one who is the hidden secret and the manifest light, the true aim and purpose; the elected one who is distinguished with the most eminent station in the domain of creation, amongst those who are favoured and those who are far; the spirit most holy and sublime and the light most perfect and resplendent, who has realised the [condition of] perfect adoration in the presence of the Adored; whose spirit has received the overflowing from the presence of His Most Holy Spirit; whose heart is as a niche illumined by the rays of His [Divine] Light – for he is the greatest Envoy, the ennobled Prophet and the Friend brought close and made blessed.

And may the blessing be upon his family and his companions, [who are] the depositories of his secrets, the places where his lights shine and his full moons rise; treasures of truths and guides for creatures; [bright] stars of guidance for all who would follow [the Way]. And may He give greetings of great peace to them [all] up to the Day of Reckoning.

Glory be to God, for I am not among those who associate. God is sufficient for us and a most excellent Guardian. There is no power nor strength save through God, the Most High, the Most Magnificent!

And praise be to God, Lord of the universes.

Monday Eve Prayer

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE AND MOST MERCIFUL

O my God, Your Knowledge embraces all that is knowable. Your Awareness encompasses the interior [meaning] of all that is understandable. You are sanctified in Your exaltedness from all that is blameable. The spiritual aspirations ascend to You, and the words soar to You.

You are the Supremely Exalted in Your eminence, so that the closest we can reach in our ascension to You is condescension [on Your part]. You are the Most Glorious in Your exaltedness, so that the noblest of our qualities with regard to You is self-abasement.

You have manifested in the interior and exterior of everything. You are permanent before every beginning and after every ending. Glory be to You! There is no god but You – the foreheads prostrate before Your Magnificence, and the lips are delighted by Your remembrance.

I ask of You, by Your Magnificent Name, to whom is elevated everyone who rises up [towards You] and from whom comes the great welcome for all who are received [by You], to grant me a heart in which the sublime aspirations request of me and the disdainful souls are led to me.

I ask of You, O my Lord, that You let Your condescension be a ladder by which I may rise to You and that You make my lowliness and abasement the means by which I may ascend to You. Envelop me in the protective covering of Your Light, by which You unveil for me everything that is veiled, and by which You conceal me from all the envious and the deluded. Grant me a character by which I embrace all that is created, and by which

I establish all that is real, just as *You have embraced everything in compassion and knowledge*.

There is no god but You. O Living One, O Self-Subsisting One!

O my Lord, instruct me with the subtle benevolence of Your Lordliness, as one who is conscious of being in total need of You should be instructed, as one who never claims to be independent of You. Watch over me with the eye of Your Providence, protecting me from all the knocks that may befall me, or anything that may afflict me or cause me to be troubled at any moment or in any perception, or that may inscribe one of the lines upon the tablet of my own will. Provide me with the ease of intimacy with You, and raise me to the station of Closeness to You. Revive my spirit with Your remembrance, and draw me on, now with hopeful longing for You, and now with reverent fear of You.

Restore to me the cloak of satisfaction, and bring me to the wellsprings of the welcome. Grant me compassion from You, re-establishing harmony in my disorder, perfecting where I am lacking, rectifying where I am deviating, restraining me when I am astray and guiding me when I am perplexed.

Indeed You are *Lord of every thing* and its instructor. You mercify the essences [of all beings] and You elevate the degrees. Your Closeness is the joy of the spirits, and the perfumed sweetness of rejoicing; the epitome of true prosperity, and the repose of all those who are at ease.

May You be blessed, Lord of lords! Liberator of slaves! Lifter of suffering! You *embrace everything in compassion and in knowledge*. You forgive wrongdoing with loving tenderness and clemency. You are the Forgiving, the Merciful, the Clement, the All-Knowing, the High, the Magnificent.

And may the blessing of God be upon our master Muhammad, and upon all his family and companions. *And praise be to God, Lord of the universes*.

Monday Morning Prayer

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE AND MOST MERCIFUL

O God, I ask of You light and guidance, and good behaviour in [my] conformity. I seek refuge in You from the evil of my soul, and from the evil of everything that separates me from You. There is no god but You. Purify my soul from doubt and bad character, from misfortune and negligence. Bestow upon me true servanthood, that I may be obedient to You in all my states.

O Knowing One, instruct me in Your Knowledge! O Wise Judge, confirm me with the wisdom of Your Judgement! O Hearing One, let me hear from You! O Seeing One, let me see Your Favours! O Fully Aware One, grant me awareness of You! O Living One, vivify me with Your Remembrance! O Willing One, purify my will through Your Grace, Power and Magnificence! *Indeed You have power over everything*.

O God, I ask of You [that I may be given] a governing divine nature, and a subservient human nature, and incisiveness of mind, embracing all in totality and in differentiation, in both form and measure.

O my God, I beseech You by Your Essence, which none can perceive and none can neglect; and by Your Uniqueness, wherein those who imagine there to be something with You have associated [others with You]; and by Your All-Encompassing, wherein those who suppose there to be another in Eternity have lied and have separated themselves from the harmony of True Purity.

O You in whose transcendence whatever exists not in His Ancientness is stripped away! O You who ordains all things in His Encompassing and Magnificence! O You who brings out the light of existence of everything from the darkness of its

non-existence! O You who forms the individuations of the spheres according to whatever Knowledge He has filled His Pen with! O You who empowers His Determinations through the secrets of His Wisdoms!

I am crying out to You, as one who is distant calls out for help from one who is close! I am beseeching You, as a lover yearning for their beloved! I am entreating You, as one constrained petitions one who favourably responds to their need!

O God, I ask You to lift up the veil of the Unseen and to untie the knots of supposition and doubt! O God, make me living through You with essential life! Teach me from Your Private Knowledge a knowledge that embraces the mysteries of all that is knowable! By Your Infinite Power, open up for me the treasure of the Garden of Paradise and the Throne and the Essence, and make my moon disappear beneath the lights of [Your] Qualities! By Your Gracious Benevolence liberate me from all the shackles of limited belief!

Glory be to You in Your transcendence! [You are] Glorified as absolutely transcendent of all traits of phenomena or attributes of lack; and [You are] Sanctified as utterly pure of all resemblance to blameworthiness or all reason for rejection.

Glory be to You! You have made every seeker incapable of reaching You except through You.

Glory be to You! None may know who You are except You.

Glory be to You! How utterly Close You are, despite the supreme elevation of Your Sublimity!

O God, invest me in the garment of Glorious Praise! Clothe me in the robe of Supreme Might! Crown me with the diadem of Majesty and Glorification! Divest me of the attributes of dispersive frivolousness and constrictive rigorousness. Liberate me from the shackles of calculation and limitation, and from the pursuit of difference, deficiency and opposition.

O my God, my non-existence in You is my very existence; my remaining with You is my very non-existence. Instead of the situation where I am imagining I exist along with You, grant that I realise my true non-existence in You, and make me whole by annihilating me in You!

There is no god but You! You are far above any like.

There is no god but You! You are elevated beyond any similar.

There is no god but You! You are without any need of minister or counsellor.

There is no god but You! O Unique One! O Universal Support and Refuge!

There is no god but You! Existence is through You alone! Prostration is to You alone! You are the One Real Truth that is adored!

I seek refuge in You from myself, and I beg You for annihilation from myself. I implore You to cover with Your Forgiveness whatever remains in me of being distanced or contemptible, or which implies any kind of separate identity.

You are the One who establishes and elevates, the One who originates and finalises, the One who differentiates and unifies. O Establisher! O Elevator! O Originator! O Finaliser! O Differentiator! O Unifier!

Protection and Refuge! Help and Succour! O my Protector! O my Helper!

Deliverance and Salvation! Sanctuary and Asylum! O You in whom lies my deliverance and sanctuary!

I ask of You that You may grant all that I have requested and entreated You for, through the one who is the foremost of primordial existence, the light of most perfect knowledge, the spirit of most eminent life, the white robe of eternal compassion, the firmament of most sublime character, whose

spirit and eminence have priority and precedence, who has completed and sealed the [Divine] form and [the cycle of] prophecy, the light who brings guidance and clarification, the compassion who brings knowledge, empowerment and security, Muhammad the chosen one, the elected Envoy, the pure one who has been accepted and approved, whose prophethood is the example to be followed.

May God's blessing be upon him, and upon his family and companions, and may He give them greetings of great peace up to the Day of Reckoning.

And praise be to God, Lord of the universes.

Tuesday Eve Prayer

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE AND MOST MERCIFUL

O my God, You are the Most Forceful in assault, the Most Painful in seizing, the Most Tremendous in conquering. [You are] the sublimely Exalted above all opponents or rivals and the utterly Transcendent from *any consort or offspring*. It is for You to take on the vanquishing of enemies and the quelling of oppressors. You trick whoever You wish *and You are the best of tricksters*.

O my God, I ask of You, by Your Name with which You *seize the forelocks*, with which You *bring down* the enemy *from the fortresses and cast terror in their hearts*, with which You make the people of suffering wretched, that You extend help to me with one of the connecting threads of Your Name the Forceful. May [this Name] pervade my partial and universal powers, so that I am enabled to do what I want, that the dark oppression of the wrongdoer may not reach me nor the arrogantly unjust assail me. Let my anger in defence of You and on Your behalf be coupled to Your Anger for Your Own Self. *Obliterate* the faces of my enemies, *change them where they stand*, *afflict their hearts* and *set up between* me and *them a wall with a door in it, the inside of which is compassion and the outside of which is chastisement*. You are Most Forceful in assault, Most Painful in seizing, Most Tremendous in punishing.

Such is the seizing of Thy Lord when He seizes the cities that do wrong. Surely His seizing is grievously painful.

O my Lord, make me rich through You, beyond need of other than You, so that this pure sufficiency leaves me free of all conditions that might make me dependent on any creaturial need or spiritual requirement. Make me reach the utmost ease

in my prosperity [in You], and elevate me to the lote-tree of my extreme limit. Let me witness existence as a cycle and the journey as an orbit, so that I may behold the mystery of Divine Descent to the ultimate ends and the Return to the very beginnings, where speech comes to an end and the vowel of the *lām* is silent, where the dot of the *ghayn* is removed from me and the One returns to the two.

O my God, grant me the facility of that secret which You have accorded to many of Your saints, a facility which will dispel from me the fog of my [apparent] self-sufficiency. Support me in all this by a radiant light, *dazzling the eyes* of *every envier among jinn and mankind*. Grant me the gift of an aptitude which brings success in every station. Make me rich beyond need of other than You, with a richness that establishes my complete poverty towards You.

Indeed You are the Rich, the Praiseworthy, the Friend, the Illustrious, the Generous, the Discerning Director!

And may the blessing of God be upon our master Muhammad, and upon all his family and companions.

Tuesday Morning Prayer

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE AND MOST MERCIFUL

O my Lord, immerse me in the *fathomless ocean* of Your Uniqueness and in the open waters of the sea of Your Oneness, and fortify me with the sovereign power and authority of Your Singularity. Thus may I emerge into the vast expanse of Your Compassion, with my face illuminated by the lightning-flashes of Closeness, which are among the marks of Your Compassion. [May I be] awe-inspiring through Your Awesomeness; strong through Your Strength; mighty through Your Forbidding Might; concerned through Your Providential Concern; exalted through Your Exaltation; esteemed and honoured through Your instruction, education and purification.

Invest me with the robe of Might and Acceptance. Clear for me paths that lead to joining and attaining. Crown me with the diadem of high nobility and dignity. Bring me together with Your loved ones in this lower world and in the world of eternal repose. Through the Light of Your Name grant me from the Light of Your Names an authority and awesomeness that hearts and spirits may be guided to me, and souls and bodies be brought to submission before me.

O You before whom the oppressors bend their necks in submission, to whom the rapacious yield in contrition! O King of this world and the other!

There is no shelter or safe-hold *from You except in You*. There is no aid except from You. There is none to put trust in except You.

Drive away from me the machinations of the envious, and the dark evils of the obdurate! Shelter me beneath the canopy of Your Mighty Dearness, O You the Most Generous of the generous!

O my God, grant aid to my exterior and interior that I may attain Your Satisfaction, and grant light to my heart and innermost secret that I may be thoroughly aware of the ways of Your working.

O my God and Master, how can I be turned away from Your Door as a failure to You when I have arrived at it with complete confidence in You?

And how can You make me despair of Your Giving when You have ordered me to ask of You? Here am I, Your servant – devoted to You, seeking refuge in You!

Put a distance between me and my enemies, just as You have put distance between the East and the West. *Dazzle their eyes*, make their feet quake and drive away from me their evil and harm, through the light of Your Holiness and the majesty of Your Glory.

Indeed You are God, the One who bestows gifts, granting the greatest of blessings, Most Esteemed, Most Venerated by the one who exchanges intimacies with You regarding the subtleties of benevolence and compassion.

O Living One! O Self-Subsistent! O Unveiler of the secrets of mystical and sacred knowledge!

May God's blessing be upon our master Muhammad, and upon all his family and companions.

Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of Eminent Might, beyond what they qualify Him with. Peace be upon the messengers. And praise be to God, Lord of the universes.

Wednesday Eve Prayer

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE AND MOST MERCIFUL

O my God, Your Name is master of the Names. In Your Hand is the kingdom of the earth and the heaven. You are the Self-Existent, who stands in every thing, *watching over every thing*. Richness beyond need is firmly established for You, and everything that is other than You, all "he" and "I", is in need of the Most Holy Effusion of Your Generosity.

I ask of You, by Your Name with which You unite the complementary oppositions and divisions of the [two realms of] Creation and Command, and with which You appoint the non-manifestation of all that appears and make appear the manifestation of all the non-manifest: bestow upon me the condition of Universal Support, by which I may still the motions of Your Power and Might, so that everything that is motionless be in motion in me, and everything that is in motion be motionless in me. Then I may find myself the *qibla* of every facing, and the unifier of each separated differentiation, by virtue of Your Name, towards which my facing is orientated and in the face of which my own will and word vanish. Thus everyone shall take from me the *firebrand* of complete guidance, which will illuminate for him what Muhammad, the chosen one (peace and blessings be upon him), has led him to. Were it not for him, the singular one, the I-ness of the Fire-bringer would not have been thrice affirmed for Moses, peace be upon him.

O He who is He! He is what He is and I am not!

I ask of You, by every Name which derives from the *Alif* of the Unseen, which encompasses the reality of all that is witnessed, that I may witness the unity of each multiple in the interior of

every immediate truth, and the multiplicity of each unit in the exterior of every ultimate reality. Then let me witness the unity of the exterior and the interior, so that whatever is unseen of that which is exterior is not concealed from me, and whatever is concealed of that which is interior is not unseen to me. Let me witness the totality in all [things], O You *in whose Hand is the kingdom of all things*.

Verily You, You are You!

Say: "God" and then leave them to play with their discussions. Alif lām mīm. God, there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-Standing.

O my Master, peace be upon You, You are my support. For You it is the same whether I address You inwardly or outwardly, for You hear my call and answer my prayer. You have banished my darkness with Your Light. You have brought my lifeless body to life with Your Spirit. You are my Lord: my hearing, my seeing, my heart are in Your Hand. You have taken possession of all of me. You have conferred eminence upon my lowliness; You have elevated my rank; You have raised high my remembrance.

May You be ever-blessed! Light of lights! Unveiler of mysteries! Granter of life in all its span! Lowerer of the curtains of protection!

In the exaltedness of Your Majesty You are transcendentally far above the characteristics of the contingent. The rank of Your Perfection surpasses all attempt to gain access to it with shortcomings, imperfections or desires. The earths and the heavens are illuminated by the pure vision of Your Essence. To You belongs the loftiest Glory, the most encompassing Honour, the most inaccessible Might.

Ever-Praised and Holy is our Lord, Lord of the angels and the spirit! It is He who illuminates the shadowy *fortresses* and the dark substances; it is He who delivers those who are drowned

in the sea of matter. *I take refuge in You from the twilight when it becomes dark and the envious* as they watch and wait.

O my Sovereign Possessor, I call out to You and entreat You, secretly confiding [in You] as a broken servant, who knows that You are listening and who firmly believes that You will respond, one who stands at Your door, *constrained in utter need*, finding no-one *to put trust in*, *other than You*.

I ask of You, my God, by that Name with which You pour forth good things, bring down blessings and confer increase upon those who are grateful, and with which You bring forth from the darkness, and with which You dismiss people of association and baseness: may You spread over me the garments of Your Lights, striking enemies blind and rendering them powerless. Grant me my portion from You, as a radiance that discloses to me every hidden matter, unveils to me every high mystery and burns up every enticing satan.

O Light of light! O Unveiler of all that is veiled! *Unto You are all matters returned*. Through You is all evil repelled. O Lord, O Merciful One, O Forgiving One!

May the blessing of God be upon our master Muhammad, and upon all his family and companions. *Peace be upon the messengers. And praise be to God, Lord of the universes.*

Wednesday Morning Prayer

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE AND MOST MERCIFUL

O my Lord, confer upon me the honour of contemplating the lights of Your Pure Holiness, and the support of manifesting the power and authority of Your Intimacy, so that I may be turned according to the glories of the knowledges [which flow] from Your Names, and that this variability may disclose to me the secrets of every atom of my being in every sphere that I contemplate. By this may I come to witness what You have placed within the seen and unseen realms, and may I behold how the mystery of Your Power permeates the evidences of Divine nature and human nature.

Grant me complete gnosis and universal wisdom, so that there remains nothing knowable [in the universe] without me coming to know the subtle threads of its intricacies, which are spread throughout existence. By this may I drive away the darkness of created things which prevent the perception of the realities of [Your] Signs, and by this may I dispose freely over the hearts and spirits, kindling true love and friendship, right conduct and guidance.

Indeed You are the Lover who is Beloved, and the Seeker who is Sought! O You *who makes all hearts turn and turn*! O You who removes all distress! You are the *One who knows all that is unseen*, the One who puts a veil over all shortcomings, the One who covers up all sin with forgiveness! O You who has never ceased to be All-Forgiving! O You who has never ceased to veil and protect!

O Forgiving One! O Veiling One! O Preserver! O Protector! O Defender! O Benefactor! O Truly Affectionate One! O

Graciously Indulgent One! O Most Subtle and Benevolent! O Most Mighty and Invincible! O Flawless, Boundless Peace!

Forgive me, veil me and preserve me. Protect me, and defend me. Bestow upon me beneficence, affection and indulgence. Be benevolent to me, make me invincible, and grant me peace and security.

Take me not to task for the baseness of my actions, and do not requite me for the evil of my works. Correct me without delay through Your complete Benevolence and the purity of Your universal Compassion. Do not let me stand in need of any other than You! Protect me and absolve me. Make my whole affair righteous and proper [to You].

There is no god but You! Glory be to You, indeed I have been of the oppressors. You are the Most Merciful of the mercifiers!

May the blessing of God be upon our master Muhammad, and upon his family and companions, salutations to them all. *Peace be upon the messengers. And praise be to God, Lord of the universes.*

Thursday Eve Prayer

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE AND MOST MERCIFUL

O my Master, You are the author of the causes and their orderer, and the director of the hearts and their turner. I ask of You, by the wisdom which determines the arrangement of the prime causes and the effect of the highest upon the lowest, that You cause me to witness the ordered arrangement of the causes, ascending and descending, so that I may thus witness the interior of them by witnessing the exterior, and the first of them in the last. Let me view the wisdom of the ordered arrangement by witnessing the Arranger and how the Author of the causes precedes causation, so that the eye of the *ʿayn* is not veiled by the [dot of the] *ghayn*.

O my God, extend to me the key of the [listening] ear, which is the *Cave* of mystical knowledge, that I may start out in every beginning through Your Name the Incomparable Inventor, by which You open every written *inscription*.

O You, through whose eminent Names every self-exalted one is brought low! Everything is through You and You are without [need of] us. You are the Original Inventor of everything and its Creator.

To You is the praise, O Faultless Originator, for every beginning! To You is the thanks, O Forever Enduring One, for every ending! You are the One who brings forth all good, the interior of all interiors who extends to the furthest reaches of things, the expansive provider of nourishment for all beings.

O God, shower me with blessings unto the very end forever, just as You have blessed Muhammad and Abraham.

Indeed this is from You and to You, and it is in the Name of God, the All-Compassionate and Most Merciful. O You who are *the Incomparable Inventor of the heavens and the earth! When He orders a thing, He says to it "Be" and it becomes*.

O my God, You are the firmly Established Ground prior to all constants, and the eternally Enduring Continuant after all speakers and non-speakers. There is no god but You, and there is no existent other than You!

To You belongs the grandeur, the power, the glory and the kingdom! You overwhelm the oppressors and destroy the deception of the unjust; You break up the gathering of those who stray and humble the necks of the arrogant.

I ask of You, O You who overcomes every victor, O You who overtakes every fugitive: [grant me] the *mantle* of Your *Pride*, the *girdle* of Your *Majesty* and the canopy of your Awesomeness and all that is beyond this, which no-one knows but You, so that I may be clothed in awe from Your Awesomeness, before which hearts may be moved to humility and *eyes lowered* in deference. Make me master of the forelock of *every obstinate tyrant* and *rebellious satan*, whose *forelocks* are in Your hand. Keep me in the lowliness of servanthood in all of this, safeguard me from deviating and shortcoming and support me in word and deed.

It is You Yourself who reassure the hearts and grant relief from worries! There is no god but You.

May the blessing of God be upon our master Muhammad, and upon all his family. *And praise be to God, Lord of the universes*.

Thursday Morning Prayer

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE AND MOST MERCIFUL

O my God, You are Self-Standing by Your own Essence; Encompassing with Your Qualities; Revealed through Your Names; Manifest in Your Acts; and Hidden by virtue of what is only known to You! You are Alone in Your Majesty, as You are the One, the Unique; and You have singularised Yourself, as You permanently endure in eternity without beginning or end. You, You are God, who by virtue of Oneness is the Only One referred to in *iyyāka*. With You there is none other than You; in You there is none but You.

I ask of You, O God, for annihilation in Your Subsistence, and for subsistence through You, not with You.

There is no god but You!

O my God, cause me to be absent [from myself] in Your Presence, annihilated in Your Being and extinguished in Your Contemplation. Sever me from all that severs me from You; occupy me with You alone by turning me away from all that distracts me from You.

There is no god but You!

O my God, You are the Truly Existent, while I am the fundamentally non-existent. Your Subsistence is by virtue of Your Essence; mine is only accidental. So, my God, lavish Your True Existence upon my fundamental non-existence, that I may be as I was when I was not at all, and You may be as You are, as You always have been!

There is no god but You!

You are the One who *accomplishes whatever You desire*, while I am a servant for You, *one among some of the servants*. O my God, You have desired me and You have desired through me – thus I am the desired and You the Desirer. May You be what is desired through me, so that You Yourself become the Desired and I the desirer!

There is no god but You!

O my God, You are unmanifest in all that is unseen; manifest in every concrete reality; heard in every account, be it true or false; known in the degree of Unity and Duality. You are the One named by the Names which have been brought down in revelation, so that You are veiled from being seen by the eye, and concealed from being grasped by the intelligence.

O my God, You have revealed Yourself in the particular revelations of Your Qualities, so that all the degrees of created existence have become diversified. In each degree You are named by the realities of all that is named, appointing the intelligences as witnesses to the intricacies of the interior realities of [all that is manifest as] Signs and of [all that is] knowable. You have released the primordial spirits upon the plains of Divine Knowledge, where they become bewildered and wander about amidst the allusions of their "Syriac" subtleties. When You have withdrawn them from all "whole and part", removed them from all "where and when", and stripped them of all "how much and what"; when You have made known to them the essential knowledge in the places of their non-recognition, liberated them by announcing Yourself as the Lord in the Divine places of annunciation, and caused all sense of separation to fall from them by raising the veil of the *ghayn*, then they are arranged according to the primordial Harmony of *Bismillāhi 'l-Raḥmāni 'l-Raḥīm*.

O my God, how often do I cry out to You as one who calls, when [in truth] You are the One who calls for the caller! How often do I secretly whisper to You as one who confides

intimacies, when You are the One who confides for the confider!

O my God, if union is the essence of separateness, and closeness the very soul of distance, if knowledge be the site of ignorance, and recognition the seat of non-recognition, what then is the destination and where the starting-point of the path?

O my God, You are what is sought behind the aim of every seeker, what is acknowledged in the eye of the denier, what is truly close in the separation of the one who distances [himself]. Yet here conjecture has supplanted understanding – who is distanced from whom? Who is favoured by whom? Beauty says "*You alone*", while Baseness cries "*the One who rendered good and beautiful all that He has created*". The former is an end at which journeying comes to a halt, and the latter is a veil by virtue of imagining there is other [than You].

O my God, when will intellect be free from the bonds of constraint? And when shall thought's eye be able to glimpse the fair beauties of essential realities? When will understanding be severed from the root of untruth? And when shall imagination be unfettered from the cloying cords which tie it to associating? When will conceptualising be safe from the schism of separating? And when shall the precious soul be detached from the characteristics of its creaturial nature?

O my God, acts of obedience do not profit You, nor do acts of disobedience harm You. In the hand of Your Almighty Sovereignty lies the command of hearts and forelocks, and *to You is returned the whole affair*, without distinguishing between obedient or disobedient.

O my God, for You no matter distracts You from any other!

O my God, for You necessity does not restrict You nor possibility limit You. Obscurity does not hide You, nor clarification explain You!

O my God, for You rational evidence does not substantiate You, nor logical proof verify You!

O my God, for You Eternity without beginning and without end coincide in Your Reality!

O my God, what is this "You" and "I"? What is this "He" and "She"?

O my God, should I search for You in plurality or in unity? How long will I have to wait for You? And how can this be done when a servant has no preparedness nor support without You?

O my God, my subsistence through You lies in my annihilation, [but is my annihilation] from myself, or in You or through You? Is my annihilation thus realised through You, or imagined through me, or conversely, or even both at once? And is my subsistence in You likewise?

O my God, my silence is a dumbness necessitating deafness, and my speaking is a deafness necessitating dumbness! Perplexity in all, yet there is no perplexity [in You].

In the Name of God, *God suffices me*. In the Name of God, *I place my trust in God*. In the Name of God, *I ask of God*. In the Name of God, *there is no power nor strength save through God*.

Our Lord, in You we place our trust; to You we turn; to You is the homecoming.

O God, I ask You to grant me of the mystery of Your Order and the grandeur of Your Decree; of the all-embracing grasp of Your Knowledge; of the special prerogatives of Your Will; of the efficacy of Your Power; of the permeation of Your Hearing and Sight; of the self-subsistent presence of Your Life; and of the necessary character of Your Essence and Qualities.

O God, O God, O God! O First, O Last! O Manifest, O Hidden! O Light, O Truth, O Most Evident!

O God, distinguish my secret heart with the secrets of Your Oneness! Sanctify my spirit with the sanctified revelations of Your Qualities! Purify my heart with the pure knowledges of Your Divinity!

O God, instruct my intellect in the sciences of Your Private Knowledge, and perfume my soul with the virtues of Your Lordship! Assure my senses by extending illuminating rays from the Presences of Your Radiant Light! Liberate the quintessential gemstones of my corporeality from the constraints of gross nature, from the condensity of sense-perception and from the confinement of place and [phenomenal] world!

O God, transport me from the descending steps of my created being and nature to the ascending flight of Your Truth and essential Reality. You are my Friend and Master: in You I die and from You I take life. *It is You alone whom we adore and it is You alone we ask for aid*.

Look upon me, O God, with that regard by which You arrange all my stages in a harmonious progression, and by which You purify the inner heart where my secrets appear, by which You elevate the spirits of my remembrance to the Highest Assembly, and by which You intensify the shining of my light.

O God, make me absent from the whole of Your creation and unite me to You through Your True Reality. Preserve me in the contemplation of the dispositions of Your Order in the myriad worlds of Your Differentiation.

O God, it is You that I turn to for aid; You that I turn my face to; You that I ask of; and You, and no other than You, that I truly desire! I do not ask of You other than You; nor do I seek of You aught but You alone!

O God, I beseech You to respond to that through the most august intercessor, the greatest excellency, the nearest beloved, the most protective friend, Muhammad the elect, the serenely pure and completely agreed to [by God], the chosen prophet.

For him I ask that You bless him with the Blessing of everlasting eternity without beginning or end, the constant, subsistent, divine and lordly Blessing. [Accomplish this] in such a way that You make me witness the reality of his perfection, that I may be consumed by the contemplation of the knowledges of his essence. [And may this Blessing] be likewise upon his family and companions, for You are the Master of that!

There is no power nor strength save through God, the High, the Magnificent. And praise be to God, Lord of the universes.

Friday Eve Prayer

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE AND MOST MERCIFUL

O my God, all the high fathers are Your servants, and You are Lord [of all] absolutely. You unite the complementary contraries, for You are the Majestic, the Beautiful. There is no end to Your sheer delight in Your Essence, as there is no end to Your witnessing of Yourself. You are too Majestic and Perfect for us to contemplate, and You are too Sublime and Beautiful for us to describe You. You are Transcendent in Your Majesty far beyond the distinguishing marks of contingencies, and Your Sublime Beauty is Sanctified from being assailed by inclinations towards It through passions.

I ask of You, by the mystery with which You unite the complementary contraries, that You bring together for me all that is disunited of my being, in such a union that I may contemplate and witness the Oneness of Your Being. Invest me with the robe of Your Beauty, and crown me with the diadem of Your Majesty, so that human souls may humble themselves before me, disdainful hearts be led to me, and the secrets of the Most Holy [Effusion] be extended to me.

Elevate my rank before You so that everyone who elevates themselves and wields power is brought low and humbled before me. Lead me to You by my forelock, and grant me mastery of the forelock of every [living thing] endowed with spirit, whose forelock is in Your Hand.

Grant me a tongue of veracity regarding [the two realms of] Your Creation and Your Command. Fill me with You, and preserve me *upon Your land and sea*. *Bring me forth from the city* of gross nature, *whose inhabitants are oppressors*, and free me from the bondage of created things.

Grant me from You an evident proof that bequeaths security, and do not grant power over me to any other than You. In my poverty towards You, make me rich beyond need of any thing sought, and accompany me with Your Richness beyond need of any thing desired.

You are my goal and my glory; to You the returning and the ultimate end. You comfort and mend the broken, and You shatter the tyrants; You take the fearful under Your wing, and You put fear into the oppressors. Yours is the Most Sublime Glory, the Most Complete Revelation and the Most Impenetrable Veil!

Glory be to You, there is no god but You: *You are my Reckoner and the best Trustee*.

Such is the seizing of your Lord when He seizes the cities that do wrong. Surely His seizing is grievously painful. Then We took vengeance upon those who sinned; and it was ever incumbent upon Us to help the believers.

O God! O Creator of all that is created! O Vivifier of all that is dead! O You who gathers together all that is dispersed, and pours forth light upon the essences of all things! Yours is the Kingdom infinitely vast, Yours the Rank of most sublime honour! Lords are Your slaves, monarchs Your servants, and the wealthy are the poor towards You, for You are Rich in Yourself beyond need of any other than You.

I ask of You, by Your Name with which You *have created each thing*, *ordaining its destiny*, and with which You bestow upon whomsoever You wish *a garden and a raiment of silk*, and the power of vicegerency and *a great kingdom*: take away my covetousness, and perfect my imperfection; grace me with the garments of Your Favour, and teach me of Your Names what is most appropriate for Divine permission and dictation; fill my interior with godfearing and compassion and my exterior with awe and grandeur, so that the hearts of the enemies be in dread of me, and the spirits of the friends find pleasure and ease with me.

They fear their Lord above them and they do what they are commanded.

O my Lord, grant me the gift of the most perfect aptitude to receive Your Most Holy Effusion, that I may be Your appointed regent in Your lands and by that keep Your displeasure away from Your servants. Indeed You appoint as regent whomsoever You wish and *You have power over all things*. You are *the Fully Aware*, *the Seer*.

May the blessing of God be upon our master Muhammad, and upon his family and companions – salutations to them all. *He is my Reckoner and the Best Trustee*.

Friday Morning Prayer

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE AND MOST MERCIFUL

O my Lord, make me advance on and on up the steps of the sciences. Make me turn round and round in the degrees of the mysteries of the realities. Protect me within the pavilion of Your Protection and the hidden secret of Your Veil from the arrival of those thoughts which do not befit the glories of Your Majesty.

O my Lord, let me stand through You in every affair. Let me witness Your Subtle Benevolence in every far and near. Open the eye of my insight within the decreeing of the arena of Union, so that I may witness the standing of all things through You, in such a contemplation that my vision is severed from all existents.

O Master of Grace and Generosity!

O my Lord, from the seas of pure detachment of the *Alif* of the most Holy Essence, bathe me with that which detaches me from all attachments that punctuate my awareness, and that close the chapter on my quest. With the primordial matter of Its Universal Dot, which appears from the Sovereign Unseen of Your Essence, fill me so that I may provide ink for the letters of created things, [and that I may be] safeguarded in that from deficiency or disfiguring.

O You, who have encompassed everything in compassion and knowledge, O Lord of all beings!

O my Lord, purify me externally and internally from the stain of otherness and from stopping at the stages, by means of an effusion from Your Pure Holiness. Absent me from them by

contemplating the lightning-flashes of Your Intimacy. Give me clear insight into the essential realities of things and the fine details of forms. Let me hear the speech of created beings in purest proclamation of Your Unity in every realm. Display Yourself in my mirror with a complete Self-Revelation of the jewels of the Names of Your Majesty and Subjugating Might, so that no oppressor among men and jinn may look upon me without there being reflected back upon them, through the radiance of that jewel [which is manifested in the mirror], that which burns up *the self that commands to wrongdoing*, thrusting them back in abased submissiveness, *turning their sight away from me in enfeebled* powerlessness.

O You to whom *all faces submit* and to whom the stiff-necked bow in total surrender! O Lord of lords!

O my Lord, distance me from any separation that severs me from the presences of Your Closeness. Strip me of whatever of my qualities is inappropriate through being overwhelmed by the lights of Your Qualities. Banish the darkness of my natural and human condition by revealing one of the lightning-flashes of the Light of Your Essence.

Assist me with an angelic power, by which I may dominate whatever of the low nature and base characteristics hold sway over me. Erase the appearances of created things from the tablet of my mind, and through the hand of Your Providence inscribe therein the mystery which is kept within Your Prior Closeness, [a secret] which is hidden between the *kāf* and the *nūn*.

Indeed His order, when He wishes a thing, is that He says to it "Be" and it becomes. So glory be to Him in whose hand is the Kingdom of all things and to whom they are brought back.

O Light of Light! O You who deluges all with the rain-clouds of His Holy Effusion! O Holy One! O Universal Support! O Protective Preserver! O Subtle Benevolence! O Lord of all beings!

60 May the blessing of God be upon our master Muhammad, and upon all his family and companions. *And praise be to God*, *Lord of the universes.*

Saturday Eve Prayer

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE AND MOST MERCIFUL

O my Master, Your Subsistence endures forever; Your Decree is executed throughout creation. You have sanctified Yourself in Your Sublimity; You have elevated Yourself in Your Holiness. *Preserving* created beings *does not burden You*, and what is unveiled to the eye of [every being] is never hidden from You. You invite whomsoever You wish to Yourself, and through Yourself You direct them to Yourself. To You belongs eternal Praise and most glorious Everlastingness.

I ask of You that at each instant I may be devoted to Your Will, acting in proper conformity, whose [only] goal is Your Closeness, coming from the fruits of works which are dependent upon Your Satisfaction. Grant me the gift of a radiant secret which will unveil to me the realities of works. Distinguish me with a wisdom coupled with authority, and an ability to allude accompanied by understanding.

Indeed You are the Friend and Patron of one who asks for Your Patronage; and the Answerer of one who calls upon You!

O my God, may Your permanent Bounty be constant upon me and may contemplation of You be ever mine. Let me contemplate my essence from Your standpoint, not from mine, so that I may be through You, and not me. Grant me from Your own Presence a total knowledge in which all the knowledgeable spirits are guided to me. Indeed You are All-Knowing, the Knower [of the Unseen]!

Blessed be the Name of Your Lord, Lord of Majesty and Generosity! With Him are the keys of the Unseen, which none knows except He. He knows whatever is in land or sea.

O my Lord, bathe me in the radiance of Your Light, unveiling for me all that is concealed within me, so that I may witness my existence in all its true perfection from Your standpoint, not from mine. Let me thus come close to You by my own attribute being dispelled from me, as You come close to me by the effulgence of Your Light upon me.

O my Lord, possibility is my true attribute, non-existence my very substance and poverty my real abode; Your Existence is my sole cause, Your Power my very agent and You my only goal! Your Knowledge is all that I need from You in my not-knowing. You are just as I know You and yet far beyond what I know! You are with every thing, and yet with You there is no thing!

You have *ordained stations* for the spiritual journey, arranged degrees for the beneficial and the harmful, and established the paths of Goodness. In all of this we are by virtue of You, while You are without [need of] us. For You are pure Good, sheer Generosity, unlimited Perfection.

I ask of You, by Your Name with which You pour forth light upon the receptacles and with which You dispel the darkness of obscurities: fill my being with light from Your Light, which is the substance of every light and the true goal of every desire, so that nothing may obscure me from what You have deposited in each atom of my being.

Grant me the gift of *a tongue of veracity* that can give expression to the witnessing of Truth, and distinguish me with clarity and eloquence from the *all-inclusive Words*. Protect me in all my utterances from claiming that which is not mine by rights, and make me speak *according to inner vision*, *I and those who follow me*.

O God, I take refuge in You from any speech that creates confusion or results in discord or sows doubt. It is from You that all words are received; it is from You that all wisdoms are obtained.

You are the One who *upholds the heavens*, the One who teaches the Names. There is no god but You, the One, the *Unique*, the Singular, the *Universal Support*, who *neither begets nor is He begotten*, *nor is there a single one like Him*.

May the blessing of God be upon our master Muhammad, and upon all his family and companions. *And praise be to God*, *Lord of the universes*.

Saturday Morning Prayer

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE AND MOST MERCIFUL

Whosoever holds fast to God is guided to a straight path.

Praise be to God who has allowed me into the preserve of God's Benevolence!

Praise be to God who has admitted me into the garden of God's Compassion!

Praise be to God who has seated me in the station of God's Love!

Praise be to God who has made me taste [the delicacies] from the tables which are spread with God's Provision!

Praise be to God who has bestowed upon me the subtle grace of conforming to God's Preference!

Praise be to God who has made me drink from wells wherein can be found God's Promise fulfilled!

Praise be to God who has clothed me in the robe of true servanthood to God!

All this despite *what I have squandered of the Divine side*, and neglected of the Divine entitlements. *That is superabundant grace from God. And who can forgive sins except God?*

O my God, Your gracious Favour is ever upon me, bringing me into being without struggle and without effort. Out of Your abundant Generosity, my hopes reach their goal, without any deserving on my part and without any predisposition [in myself].

I ask You, by the One of all units and by the Witnessed of all witnesses, for the perfect security of the gift of love against the tribulation of distance; for the dispelling of the darkness of stubborn opposition, through the light of the sun of right guidance; and for the opening of the doors of proper action, through the helping hand of [the saying] *Indeed God is full of benevolence to the servants*.

O my Lord, I ask of You that the whereness of my being be annihilated, and that the security of my witnessing remain; and that the distinction between me as a witness and me as a witnessed be preserved, through the union of my condition as [created] existent with my [real] being.

O my Master, through Your True Reality save my servanthood from the blinding clouds of conjecture of seeing otherness. Make me inheritor of Your prior Word given to *the chosen*, *the best*. Be the master of my affair, choosing for me in every state and every desire. Help me by the affirmation of Your Unity and Well-Seatedness, whether in movement or in rest.

O my Beloved, I ask You for a swift reunion, with creative Beauty, impregnable Majesty and exalted Perfection, in every state and in every outcome.

O You who is He, O He apart from whom there is none but He!

I ask of You – by the most Unfathomable Unseen and by the Most Holy Essence; *in the night when it closes in*, *and the dawn when it streams out; truly this is the word of a noble messenger, endowed with power and firmly established with the Lord of the Throne*, *completely obedient and trustworthy*, *in an Arabic tongue most clear*, *truly it is a bringing-down by the Lord of all beings* – [I ask You] for the authority of one who pronounces clear judgement by means of his hidden spirit, on the external forms of the [Divine] Exposition by virtue of the gift of investiture.

And I ask of You, O God, that this be brought for me, with all the capacity of my life's breath, through the spirits that animate my greetings, [when I address You] with Your blessed prayers and Your everlasting salutations upon the one who is the means by which quests are fulfilled, the uniting link by which lovers attain, and also upon all those who are related to him in all the degrees. He is the most clear Truth. Make us one of their special company. Amen.

May the blessing of God be upon our master Muhammad, and upon all his family and companions.

Glory to your Lord, Lord of Eminent Might, beyond all that they qualify Him with. Peace be upon the messengers. And praise be to God, Lord of the universes.

Notes to the Prayers

Opening Prayer

Line 7 His Precedence refers to the Divine foreknowledge of creation: "God ordains no decree except through the precedent decree of the Book, for His Knowledge in things is the same as His Word in His giving existence. The Word is not changed with Him, so no creator or created possess any authority except by virtue of what the Divine Book foreordains. This is why He says: 'I do not wrong the servants' (Q.50:29). That is to say, 'We bring about for them only what is precedent in knowledge, and I judge them only through what precedes'" (*Fut*.IV.15).

Line 9 See Q.89:27: "O soul at peace, come back to your Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing."

Line 13 Literally, the "*Salsabīl* of Opening" (*salsabīl al-fatḥ*). This is a reference to the people of virtue (*al-abrār*): "… they will be given to drink therein a cup tempered with ginger, from a spring named *Salsabīl*" (Q.76:18). The same group "will be given to drink of a pure sealed beverage (or nectar)" (Q.83:25).

Lines 34–5 See Q.3:173: "Those who were told: 'People have mustered against you, so fear them', yet this only increased them in faith and they said: 'God suffices us, the most beneficent Trustee.'"

Sunday Eve Prayer

The two letters of this prayer are: *hā'*, as in *hū* (He) and *hādī* (guide); and *qāf*, as in *qāhir* (subjugating), *qā'im* (existent), *qayyūm* (self-subsisting), *qadr* (power), *qurb* (closeness), *quds* (holiness) and *qalb* (heart). As an example of the importance of sound in the prayers, we might mention that the letter *qāf* is repeated more than seventy times in the second half of the prayer.

Throughout this prayer Ibn ʿArabī is making use of many contrasting expressions and we have tried to keep the sense of these contrasts in the translation: seen and unseen, exterior and interior, unlimited and limited, the light of His Face and the ultimate Light, the One who is prior to creation and the One who preserves all creation, the Power in this world and in the next, and so on.

Lines 4–5 See the verse: "All faces submit to the Living, the Self-Subsisting" (Q.20:111).

Line 5 See the verse: "… He shall give them respite till the day on which the eyes shall gaze" (Q. 14: 42), in other words the Day of Reckoning (*yawm al-dīn*), when everyone is brought face to face with their Lord. It is the Day on which the King requites his subjects for their actions.

Line 8 The letter *hā'* stands for the "He-ness" or Ipseity (*huwiyya*), which preserves Itself as Unseen and preserves the creation (*kawn*). The Perfect Man, who mirrors God completely, is thus simultaneously preserved as "He" and "not-He". See Appendix D.

Line 9 Literally, "there is no he except He", a mirror to the phrase "there is no god but God".

Line 13 "… restrain the claws" alludes to the verse: "If they withdraw not from you, and offer you peace, and restrain their hands, take them and slay them wherever you come on them; against them We have given you a clear authority" (Q. 4: 91).

Lines 13–14 Referring to the verse: "So the last remnant of the people who did evil was cut off" (Q. 6: 45).

Line 18 Referring to the verse: "Does He not encompass all things?" (Q. 41: 54).

Lines 18–19 Referring to the verse: "He has Supreme Power over His servants and He is the Wise, the Fully Aware" (Q. 6: 18).

Line 20 This refers to the verse: "What, He who stands over every soul for what it has earned? And yet they ascribe partners to God" (Q. 13: 33). Here the author is playing with the two forms, *qā'im* and *qayyūm*, of the root *q-w-m*, which carries meanings of existing, rising and standing, but also denotes being in charge of, watching over and persisting. It seems that he is making a correlation between the way God stands over every soul, calling it to account and His irresistible Power, on the one hand, and between His subsistence in all comprehension and His Knowledge, on the other.

Line 25 "The Creation and the Command": in other words, the world of matter, within which His Might is irresistible, and the world of spirit, within which He has the Power of ordainment or destiny. See the verse: "Indeed your Lord is *Allāh*, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then settled Himself upon the Throne, covering the day with the night, pursuing it swiftly – and the sun and moon and stars, subservient by His Order. Verily to Him belongs the Creation and the Command. Blessed is God, Lord of all beings" (Q. 7: 54). As Ibn ʿArabī remarks in his discussion of this verse, "God specified these (creation and command) for the Name Lord (*rabb*), apart from any other. The world of creation and composition requires [the existence of] evil by its very essence, while the world of command is the good in which there is no evil." (*Fut.* II: 575, translated in *SDG*, p. 310.)

Line 26 An implicit reference to "He is with you wherever you are" (Q. 57: 4).

Line 31 See the following verse which has an implied warning to the believers: "If Muhammad should die or be slain, will you turn back on your heels?" (Q. 2: 143 or

3:144). The word used here for "turning back" (*inqalaba*) is derived from the same root as "heart" (*qalb*).

Line 34 The "innermost centre" (*sirr*) denotes the heart of the human being, the fundamental ground of awareness which is "above" or beyond all qualification. "Taste" is a technical term denoting direct experience of Reality.

Line 35 The phrase "a truly receptive heart" (*qalban qābilan*) can be found in the famous line in the *Tarjumān al-ashwāq* (poem XI, p. 67): "My heart has become capable of all forms".

Lines 37–8 The phrase "a hand of empowerment" (*yadan qādiratan*) establishes the connection of the hand to the Name *al-Qādir*, which is explained in the following passage: "When the hand of the servant becomes the Hand of the Real (*al-ḥaqq*), may He be exalted, then that is the [total] empowering which is sought from the investment [of man with the Divine Name the Totally Able, *al-Qādir*]. 'Those who swore fealty to you, in reality swore fealty to God. The Hand of God is over their hands' (Q. 48:10). God, may He be exalted, also said: 'And when I love him, I become his hearing by which and within which he hears, and his hand with which he takes'. This Name does not require an action to take place; rather, it demands a condition of [total] empowerment when required, without any possible hindrance" (*Kashf*, 69–3).

Lines 38–9 Referring to the verse: "O soul at peace, return to Thy Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing!" (Q. 89:27–8).

Line 45 See the verse: "It is not your wealth nor your children that shall bring you close in nearness to Us (*ʿindanā zulfā*); only the one who has faith and acts righteously" (Q. 34:37).

Lines 53–4 This refers to the famous story about the Prophet when he was a small boy: "There came unto me two men, clothed in white, with a gold basin of snow. Then they laid hold upon me, and splitting open my breast they brought forth my heart. This likewise they split open and took from it a black clot which they cast away. Then they washed my heart and my breast with the snow… Satan toucheth every son of Adam the day his mother beareth him, save only Mary and her son." (Lings, *Muhammad*, p. 26; see also Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger*, p. 68.)

Line 55 In the Quran purity and purification are specifically coupled with the first day, which is Sunday. See Q. 9:108: "A mosque founded upon godwariness from the first day (*min awwali yawmin*) is worthier for you to stand in: therein are men who love to purify themselves, and God loves those who are purified (*al-muṭahharūn*)."

Sunday Morning Prayer

In Arabic, Sunday is named *yawm al-aḥad*. This is usually taken to mean the first day of the week, but it may equally be translated as the Day of the One, pertaining to the Divine Name *al-Aḥad* (the One or Unique). Ibn ʿArabī refers to this second

meaning, for example, in the following passage: "Some gnostics fast on Sunday specifically because it is the Day of the One, for the One is an attribute that asserts the incomparability of the Real." (*Fut.* II: 647, translated in *SDG*, p. 315.) The emphasis in this prayer on *aḥad* and related terms such as *wāḥid* (One), *aḥadiyya* (Uniqueness) and *tawḥīd* (Union) is entirely consonant with this reading, as is the association of Sunday with the prophet Idrīs (whose message according to the Shaykh primarily concerned the meaning of *tawḥīd*).

Line 1 "In the Name of God" opens the Quran and every sura except the ninth (*al-Tawba*).

Line 2 "Praise be to God" is the first verse of the first sura, the Fātiḥa. As the origin of existence is God, the principle of each thing in existence is praise of Him.

Line 9 Allusion to the hadith: "God is (*kāna*) and there is with Him no thing", more commonly translated or understood as "God was …". To this were added the words referred to here, "He is now as He has [always been]" (*huwa'l-ān ʿalā mā ʿalayhi kāna*), which again could be translated as "He is now as He is". In his discussion of this hadith, Ibn ʿArabī specifies: "He is not accompanied by thingness nor do we ascribe it to Him. Know that the word *kāna* generally refers to a temporal limitation [hence the translation 'was'], but that is not the case here. What is meant here is the apparent existence (*kawn*), in the sense of Being (*wujūd*), and so *kāna* here acts not as a verb demanding temporality but as a sign indicating being (*ḥarf wujūdī*)" (*Fut.* II: 56). See also *Fut.* I: 41 or II: 592 for further discussion of this saying.

Line 11 "He has in every thing a Sign pointing to the fact that He is One" is a verse by Abū al-ʿAtāhiya quoted often in Ibn ʿArabī's writings (see *Fut.* I: 491). A "Sign" (*āya*) also has the meaning of a "Verse" of the Quran. "Existence is entirely letters, words, suras and verses, and it is the macrocosmic Quran" (*Fut.* IV: 167).

Lines 15–16 According to the hadith, this formula is "one of the treasures of the Throne", and is also said to have been the attribute of Adam. See *Fut.* II: 436 (translated in *UM*, pp. 143–4) for the vision which Ibn ʿArabī had of the Divine Throne: this formula was uttered by the "treasure beneath the Throne", which is Adam.

Line 20 Allusion to the verse: "Have not the unbelievers then beheld that the heavens and the earth were a mass all sewn up, and then We unstitched them and of water fashioned every living thing?" (Q. 21: 30).

Line 21 Q. 2: 156.

Line 31 This can also be translated as: "… all is concealed and adored".

Lines 36–7 When Abū Saʿīd al-Kharrāz was asked how he had come to know God, he replied "By His uniting the opposites" and then quoted this verse (Q. 57: 3). Ibn ʿArabī points out in *Fut.* III: 300 that God is here referred to as *ʿalīm*, normally translated as "All-Knowing", but which for him denotes both the knower (*ʿālim*) and the known (*maʿlūm*). So he understands this final phrase to indicate that God is both the Knower and the Known of everything. He applies this understanding to all

Names that have this form (for example, *ḥamīd*), which can be understood as either active or passive.

Line 42 In reference to the hadith: "I am not able to enumerate all Your praises; You are such that You extol Yourself." The word "extol" (*athnā*) comes from a root which means "to double". Praise can be understood as being doubled since He is both Praiser and Praised.

Line 43 The whole section of the prayer up to this point rhymes in *–ūd*, and this rhyme is repeated at the end of the prayer in the blessing upon the Prophet.

Lines 45–6 Referring to the verse: "He is knowing of all that is in front of them and all that is behind them, and they cannot encompass Him in knowledge. The faces bow before the Living One, the Self-Subsisting" (Q. 20: 110). This line indicates the process of "descent" from the Essence to the manifestation, encompassing both the vertical dimension (above and below) and the horizontal (in front and behind).

Lines 53–4 Allusion to the verse: "Wheresoever you turn, there is the Face of God" (Q. 2: 115).

Lines 64–6 See the Chapter on Adam in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, where Ibn ʿArabī gives a similar description of the Perfect Man (*insān kāmil*): "As for being Man, that is due to the universality of his formation and his embracing all the realities. He is for God as the pupil is for the eye, [a hole or channel] by which the act of seeing takes place… Through him God looks upon His creatures and bestows Compassionate Mercy upon them." (Arabic, p. 50; *Fusus*, pp. 110–12; *Bezels*, p. 51; *Wisdom*, p. 12.)

Lines 67–8 See the verse: "O ye people, you are the poor towards God, while God is the Rich beyond need, the Praiseworthy" (Q. 35: 15).

Lines 120–6 See the Chapter on Idrīs in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* where, in his comment on the Quranic verse "He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden", Ibn ʿArabī writes: "He is the same as that which manifests, and the same as that which is hidden when He manifests. There is no-one who can see Him other than Him, and there is no-one from whom He is hidden! He is the Manifest to Himself and the Hidden from Himself!" (Arabic, p. 77; *Fusus*, pp. 339–40; *Bezels*, pp. 85–6; *Wisdom*, p. 36.)

Lines 143–4 This refers first of all to the verbal attestation (*shahāda*) that "there is no god but God". It also points to the fact that He has established this in His Knowledge from all eternity and that He has ordered mankind to have faith in and realise the meaning of this attestation, as in "I have not created men and jinn except to worship Me" (Q. 51: 56).

Lines 145–9 Here the first person is ambiguous: in the Presence of Unity the duality of I–You is dissolved, and this can refer to the Divine Me.

Line 149 Allusion to the verse: "Every day He is at work (or: involved in an affair)" (Q. 55: 29).

Line 154 "Separating and restoring" could also be translated as "unstitching and sewing up".

Line 155 When one of his companions declared that he was a true believer, the Prophet responded: "To every immediate truth belongs an essential truth" (*likulli ḥaqq ḥaqīqa*).

Lines 157–60 Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ, the Chapter of Purity (Q. 112).

Lines 161–2 This, and all the following epithets, evidently refer to the Prophet Muhammad. Ibn ʿArabī considers him to be both the first to be given existence in potential, the primordial Man, and the first in rank in actual existence, the complete Perfection of Man. The first aspect is summarised by the hadith "I was a prophet while Adam was between water and clay", while the second corresponds to his saying "I will be the master of mankind on the Day of Resurrection, without boasting". See *Fut.* III: 141.

Lines 163–4 See the verse: "By the heaven of the constellations, by the promised day, by the witness and the witnessed, slain were the Men of the Pit" (Q. 85: 1–3).

Lines 172–3 An allusion to the famous verse of Light: "The likeness of His Light is as a niche wherein is a lamp (the lamp is in a glass, and the glass is as it were a glittering star), kindled from a blessed Tree, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would wellnigh shine, even if no fire touched it; Light upon Light" (Q. 24: 35).

Line 180 See Q. 82: 17–19: "What can tell you of the Day of Reckoning (*yawm al-dīn*)? Again, what can tell you of the Day of Reckoning? A day when a soul has no power to help another, and the command on that day is God's."

Line 181 Q. 12: 108.

Lines 181–2 Q. 3: 173.

Monday Eve Prayer

The two letters of this prayer are: *wāw*, as in *wāsiʿ* (embracing), *sumū* (eminence) and *ʿulū* (exaltedness); and *rāʾ*, as in *rabb* (lord), *raqīb* (watching over), *razzāq* (nourishing), *raḥma* (compassion), *rāḥa* (ease) and *rūḥ* (spirit).

Line 5 See the verse: "Unto Him do good words soar, and the righteous deed, He uplifts it" (Q. 35: 10).

Line 19 Literally, "a secret" (of the heart), referring to the *ḥadīth qudsī*: "… the heart of My faithful servant contains Me".

Lines 22–3 Compare this with Ibn ʿArabī's account of Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī. "When he asked God: 'O my Lord, with what can I draw close to You?', God replied: 'You may only draw close to Me by that which does not belong to Me.' 'And what is it that does not belong to You?' God replied: '[The qualities of] abasement (*dhilla*) and neediness (*iftiqār*)' " (*Fut.* III: 316).

Line 28 This last phrase can also be translated as "by which I satisfy every right".

Lines 28–9 Q. 40: 7.

Line 30 A reference to the Verse of the Throne, the Āyat al-Kursī: "God, there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-Subsisting" (Q. 2: 255).

Lines 37–8 We may understand this as an allusion to the tradition that the actions which spring from one's personal will are recorded, as if on a tablet of stone, and on the Day of Reckoning when the person stands before God, they are called to account for them.

Lines 41–2 Allusion to the verse: "So We heard [Zachariah's] prayer, and bestowed John upon him and made his wife whole for him. They would hasten to the good, and call upon Us in hopeful longing (*raghba*) and reverent fear (*raḥba*)" (Q. 21: 90).

Line 48 Q. 6: 164.

Line 49 Allusion to the verse: "Elevator of degrees is He, Possessor of the Throne, casting the Spirit by His bidding upon whomsoever He wishes of His servants, that he may give warning of the Day of Meeting" (Q. 40: 15).

Lines 49–51 This is an allusion to the verse: "If he be of those brought close, there shall be joy and sweetness (*rawḥ wa rayḥān*) and a garden of delight" (Q. 56: 89). Literally, *rayḥān* signifies the aromatic plant, sweet basil, which grows wild throughout the Mediterranean. In these lines Ibn ʿArabī plays on the many forms of the root *r–w–ḥ*: *rawḥ* (joy or rest), *rūḥ* (spirit), *rayḥān* (sweetness or scent), *rāḥa* (repose or ease) and *murtāḥ* (one given ease). See *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Chapter of Jesus: "Nourish His creation through Him, and thou wilt be a reviving rest and a scent of life (*rawḥān wa rayḥān*)." (Arabic text, p. 143; *Fusus*, p. 715; *Bezels*, p. 179; *Wisdom*, p. 74.)

Lines 53–4 Allusion to: "O our Lord, lift from us the suffering; we are believers" (Q. 44: 12).

Line 54 Q. 40: 7.

Line 56 These Divine Names, "the Forgiving, the Merciful" (*al-Ghafūr al-Raḥīm*), which contain both the letters of this prayer (*wāw* and *rāʾ*), occur many times in the Quran. See for example the verse: "Say: O my people, who have been prodigal against yourselves, do not despair of God's Mercy; surely God forgives sins altogether; indeed He is the Forgiving, the Merciful" (Q. 39: 53).

Lines 56–7 See for example: "God knows what is in your hearts; God is All-Knowing, Clement (*ʿAlīm Ḥalīm*)" (Q. 33: 51).

Line 57 This pair of Names, "the High, the Magnificent", also appears several times. For example: "To Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in earth, and He is the High, the Magnificent (*al-ʿAlī al-ʿAẓīm*)" (Q. 42: 4).

Monday Morning Prayer

Although the week traditionally begins with Sunday, Ibn ʿArabī considers it to be a special case because it is the Day of the Unique (*aḥad*). Since "unique" is not a number, he does not consider it to be the start of the days of the week. He therefore describes Monday as "the beginning of the days" (*ṣadr al-ayyām*; *Fut.* II: 652).

Line 2 Conformity to God (*iqtidāʾ*) normally refers to following the model and guidance of the prophets. See for example the verse in reference to the prophets, eighteen of whom are explicitly mentioned: "Those are they whom God has guided; so follow their guidance" (Q. 6: 90). The coupling of Divine guidance and conformity is also attested in the following hadith: "God has thus guided us and we conform to Him."

Line 13 Q. 3: 26.

Lines 28–30 All creatures are considered as letters written by the Pen, which symbolises the First Intellect.

Lines 34–5 Allusion to the verse: "He who answers the constrained (*al-muḍṭarr*) when he calls unto Him, and removes the evil, and appoints you to be successors of the earth. Is there a god with God? Little indeed do you remember" (Q. 27: 62).

Line 42 Literally, "efface me or make me disappear" (*amḥaqnī*). The root *m–ḥ–q* carries the basic meaning of effacement or obliteration, but is typically used of the waning or disappearance of the moon. This latter meaning seems more appropriate here because of the imagery of light.

Line 49 The word *wuṣūl* ("reaching") is very difficult to translate precisely: to reach God implies a "distance" to be overcome, and yet there can be no real distance, only an imagined chasm. When He removes this illusion, then the seeker may see through His Sight that he is already in Union.

Lines 72–3 Allusion to "Your Lord has decreed that you shall not adore any but Him" (Q. 17: 23). This for Ibn ʿArabī signifies that we cannot adore any but God, since He is the only Existent.

Line 74 Allusion to the hadith: "I seek refuge in You from You." In his commentary on this hadith, Ibn ʿArabī notes that the second person ("in You from You") is repeated without specifying who it refers to: "The one who seeks refuge sees himself according to His Form and so he says: 'from You', meaning that he takes refuge in God from Himself/himself (*min nafsihi*). This self (*nafs*) is the [Divine] Likeness … You can thus consider both pronouns to be one [referring to the same subject] or that the pronoun 'from You' refers [only] to the Likeness which is the self that takes refuge from the hidden Divine ruse. [And that only applies to] the representative (*khalīfa*) who attains the Divine Form in the most complete manner" (*Fut.* III: 183).

Line 77 Or "which gives me a name or a surname (*kunya*)". Literally, *kunya* denotes having children. Compare this to the following extract from a poem in the *Dīwān* (no. 94, p. 44):

I am the Reviver – I have no *kunya*
and no *nisba*. I am the Hatimite Arab, Muḥammad!
To every age is one who is its Essence,
and I alone am now that Individual.

Lines 80–1 The aim of this invocation is the actualisation of the properties of these Divine Names in the servant.

Lines 89–90 "The robe/carpet of compassion" (*bisāṭ al-raḥma*) is an idiom for the winding sheet or shroud in which a corpse is laid, which is traditionally the white robe of purity worn by the pilgrim in Mecca during the pilgrimage. This phrase could also be read more figuratively as "the one who extends eternal compassion to the whole of creation".

Tuesday Eve Prayer

The two letters of this prayer are: *shīn*, as in *shadīd* (forceful), *baṭsh* (assault) and *sha'n* (business); and *ghayn*, as in *ghanī* (rich), *ghayma* (fog) and *ghalaba* (victory). Their combination is suggested in the verse "by the night when it envelops her" (*yaghshāhā*; Q. 91: 4).

Line 1 Allusion to the verse: "Surely your Lord's assault is most forceful" (Q. 85: 12). This combination is found elsewhere in the Quran in reference to earlier peoples who thought themselves mighty: "How many a generation have We destroyed before them, who were mightier in power (*ashadda minhum baṭshan*)" (Q. 50: 36). This Name also appears in a positive meaning in the prayer of Lot: "Would that I had the power over you or had recourse to a firm support (*rukn shadīd*)!" (Q. 11: 80). In the Chapter on Lot in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Ibn ʿArabī writes: "The Envoy of God said: 'May God have mercy upon my brother Lot, for he had recourse to a firm support', and he meant by this that he was with God in respect of [His Name] the Forceful. By the words 'firm support' Lot meant his own people, and by the words 'would that I had the power over you' he meant [the power of] resistance, which refers to that power of concentration peculiar to man." (Arabic, p. 127; *Fusus*, p. 629; *Bezels*, pp. 157–8.)

Lines 1–2 Both these epithets, the Forceful (*shadīd*) and the Painful (*alīm*), are found together in the Sura of Hūd, in the context of previous generations who have spurned the Divine invitation brought by the prophets: "Surely His seizing is painful, forceful" (Q. 11: 102).

Line 4 Referring to: "He, glory be to Him, has taken to Himself neither consort nor son" (Q. 72: 3).

Lines 6–7 Q. 8: 30.

Lines 8–9 See the verse: "The sinners shall be known by their mark, and they shall be seized by their forelocks and their feet" (Q. 55: 41).

Lines 9–10 See the verse: "And He brought down those of the People of the Book who supported them from their fortresses and cast terror in their hearts" (Q. 33:26). This refers to the War of the Trench in AH 5, when the Jews of Banū Qurayẓa withdrew to their fortresses but were forced to surrender to the Muslim army from Medina.

Line 12 "Connecting threads" (*raqā'iq*) is a technical term in Ibn ʿArabī's writing, denoting that which ties together different levels of existence: "Between the two worlds there are 'threads' which extend from each [spiritual] form to its likeness [in the lower world], connecting them together so they are not disconnected. Ascent and descent take place upon these threads, so that they are as ascending and descending ladders" (*Fut.* III: 260).

Lines 17–18 There are two allusions in these lines, combined for emphasis. One is to a part of the prayer of Moses when faced with the oppression and opposition of Pharaoh and his people in Egypt: "O our Lord, obliterate their riches and afflict their hearts, so that they shall not believe [in You] until they have suffered a painful punishment" (Q. 10:89). The second allusion is to the verse: "If We so willed, We would obliterate their eyes, then they would rush to the Path but how should they see? If We so willed, We would change them where they stand, then they could not go on nor could they return" (Q. 36:67).

Lines 18–20 See the verse: "[The hypocrites] will be told: Go back and seek for light. Then a wall will be set up between them, with a door in it, on the inside of which is compassion and on the outside chastisement" (Q. 57:13).

Lines 22–3 Q. 11:102.

Lines 28–9 The Quranic expression "the lote-tree of the extreme limit" (*sidrat al-muntahā*) indicates for Ibn ʿArabī the furthest point, in the ascent to God (*miʿrāj*), which the soul as such can reach. It is situated at the limit of the seventh heaven. "He saw him in another descent, at the Lote-Tree of the Extreme Limit, close to which lies the Garden of Abode, when the lote-tree was enveloped by that which envelops (*yaghshā*)" (Q. 53:14). For further references, see Ibn ʿArabī's *K. al-Isrā'*, Arabic text, p. 109.

Lines 32–3 The silence of the *lām* alludes to Ibn ʿArabī's complex understanding of the phrase *li-llāh* (as in *al-ḥamdu li-llāh*, praise belongs to God). In Arabic, the first part of this phrase, *li*, is a particle written with the letter *lām*, meaning "belonging to" or "for"; the vowel, "i", is called *kasra*, which is "separated" or written below the letter and is therefore in a subordinate position. The ending in *kasra* is called "lowering" (*khafdh*) by the grammarians, and was interpreted by the Sufi tradition as a symbol of servanthood. See, for example, Qushayrī's *Naḥw al-qulūb al-kabīr* ("Grammar of the Hearts"), p. 40.

The letter *lām* thus symbolises the servant, who is "separated" or subordinate to God, and when his vowel is silenced (literally, "when his movement ceases"), then he is reunited with Him, and all that remains is God (*Allāh*). For the symbolical meaning of this *li*, see *Fut.* I: 111ff., translated by Gerald Elmore in *Praise*, pp. 80ff.

Line 33 In Ibn ʿArabī's writings, *ghayn* is taken as the symbol of separation or

distance from reality, since it is the first letter of *ghayr* (other). If the dot is removed from the letter *ghayn*, it becomes the letter *ʿayn*, which signifies also "Essence". It may refer here to the One Reality (*al-ʿayn al-wāḥida*).

Line 34 The relation between the One and the two is beautifully described in the following passage: "The utmost purpose of the servant is that he praises his own Self which he beholds in the [Divine] Mirror, since there is no aptitude for the originated to bear the Pre-Existent." (*Fut.* I: 112, translated in *Praise*, p. 86.)

Line 38 Referring to the verse: "God encompasses the unbelievers; the lightning dazzles their eyes; when it gives them light, they walk in it, and when the darkness is over them, they halt" (Q. 2: 19).

Lines 38–9 Allusions to the two "Refuge" suras at the end of the Quran: "I take refuge in the Lord of the Daybreak … from the evil of an envier when he envies" (Q. 113: 5); and "I take refuge in the Lord of mankind … from the evil of the whisperer who whispers in the breasts of men, among jinn and men" (Q. 114: 5).

Line 43 This combination of Names "the Rich, the Praiseworthy" (*ghanī ḥamīd*) occurs often in the Quran. For example: "O mankind, you are the poor towards God, and He is the Rich, the Praiseworthy" (Q. 35: 15). Note that all these Names are in the *faʿīl* pattern, which is both active and passive.

Tuesday Morning Prayer

Two manuscripts record what we take to be an oral commentary by Ibn ʿArabī himself on the writing of this prayer. In the margin of [R], we find the following details: "The shaykh Muḥyīddīn Ibn ʿArabī, may God sanctify his secret, said: 'Two men of awesome mien, dressed in white, appeared to me during a retreat, and they told me to pray with this prayer, which is called the Prayer of Unveiling (*duʿāʾ al-kashf*).'" In [P] this is corroborated with the following information: "Two shaykhs of awesome mien appeared to me during a retreat on the Mountain of Opening (*jabal al-fatḥ*) in the year AH 610. One of them said to me: 'Transmit this from me to all sincere seekers and agreeing aspirants.'"

Bearing in mind the correspondence between Tuesday and the prophet Aaron, we may infer that the two awesome-looking men could have been Moses and Aaron, the latter taking his customary role as "public" speaker – certainly this prayer has many Mosaic references. Alternatively, as Tuesday is also associated with the prophet Yaḥyā (John the Baptist), we may also take these figures to be Aaron and John. As for the mountain, there are several possibilities: it might denote somewhere near Mecca or Medina, such as Mount Hira where Muhammad was inspired by the Angel Gabriel, or it could perhaps refer to Mount Sinai, although we have no other evidence that Ibn ʿArabī ever visited the site. Equally, it could refer to other sacred mountains such as Mount Qāsiyūn, which dominates Damascus, or Mount Tabor, scene of the Transfiguration. What is clear is that those who heard Ibn ʿArabī's words knew which place he was referring to.

Line 1 Allusion to the verse: "They are as darknesses upon a fathomless ocean (*fī baḥri lujjiyyin*), wave upon wave covering its surface, above which are clouds, layers of darkness piled one upon another; when he puts forth his hand, he cannot see it" (Q. 24:40).

Line 2 Allusion to the following passages in the Quran where the sea (*yamm*) both destroyed the Pharaoh and his hosts and washed away the ashes of the Golden Calf: "We revealed unto Moses, 'Go with My servants by night; strike for them a dry path in the sea, fearing not overtaking, neither afraid.' Pharaoh followed them with his hosts, but they were overwhelmed by the sea; so Pharaoh had led his people astray, and was no guide to them" (Q. 20:78), and "We will surely burn it and scatter its ashes into the sea. Your God is only One God; there is no god but He alone, who in His Knowledge embraces everything" (Q. 20:97).

Lines 3–4 Allusion to the verse where God addresses Moses: "We will strengthen your arm by means of your brother (Aaron), and We shall appoint to you both an authority (*sulṭān*)" (Q. 28:35).

Line 16 "Your Name" refers to *Allāh*, the comprehensive Name which unites all the Names, while "Your Names" refers to the plurality of Names through which God manifests.

Lines 22–3 Alluding to: "And to the three who were left behind, when … they thought that there was no shelter from God except in Him, then He turned towards them, that they might also turn; surely God turns and is Merciful" (Q. 9:118). The other phrases allude to: "It is You we ask for aid" (Q. 1:4) and "In Him I put my trust" (Q. 9:129).

Line 39 See the verses: "God encompasses the unbelievers: the lightning may well-nigh dazzle their eyes; whenever it gives them light, they walk in it, and when the darkness is over them, they halt. If God had so willed, He could have taken away their hearing and sight. Truly God is powerful over all things" (Q. 2:19–20).

Line 48 Some manuscripts add here: "Preserve me with the majesty of Your Holiness and Your Glory! Indeed You are God, there is no god but You, You alone without partner! And I bear witness that our master Muhammad is Your servant and messenger, Your truly loving and intimate friend."

Lines 51–3 Q. 37:180–2.

Wednesday Eve Prayer

The two letters of this prayer are: *alif*, as in *Allāh*, *ism* (name), *ana* (I) and *anta* (you); and *sīn*, as in *sayyid* (master), *salām* (peace), *sanad* (support), *subbūḥ* (glorifying) and *ism* (name).

Line 1 "Your Name" is Allāh, which unites all the Names.

Lines 1–2 Allusion to the verse: "Glory be to Him, in whose Hand is the kingdom of all things" (Q. 36: 84).

Lines 2–3 The word *qā'im* ("Self-Existent") comes from the root *q–w–m*, which has a basic meaning of "to stand erect", from which it comes to mean "to be existent" or "to subsist". This corresponds to the verticality of the *alif*.

Line 5 The two pronouns "he" and "I" denote all those absent and present, apart from the One addressed.

Line 12 This is the condition of being Support to all the Names. "The *Ṣamad* is the presence where the effects of the Names are manifest" (*Kashf*, no. 68). "This is the Presence of Recourse and Reliance (*al-iltijā' wa-l-istinād*) which everyone in need falls back on for support" (*Fut.* IV: 295). Here there is also an allusion to the Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ (Q. 112), where *Allāh* is described first as Unique (*aḥad*) and then as Universal Support (*ṣamad*).

Lines 13–14 The roots *ḥ–r–k* (motion) and *s–k–n* (motionless) also refer to the vowelling and non-vowelling of the letters.

Lines 15–16 Just as the *qibla* defines the direction in which all Muslims pray, so the Name *Allāh* can be considered the *qibla* of the Names, for each Name refers to or is orientated to Him. *Allāh* is also the unifier or synthesiser (*jāmiʿ*) of all the Names, in that they are ultimately identical with Him. In the same way, in terms of letters, the *alif* is both *qibla* and unifier.

Line 19 Allusion to the story of Moses on Mount Sinai: "Has the story of Moses reached you? When he perceived a fire, he said to his family: 'Wait here awhile, I behold a fire. Perhaps I can bring you a firebrand (*qabaṣ*) from it or I shall find at the fire guidance (*hudā*)'. When he came to it, a voice cried: 'Moses, I am your Lord; take off your sandals, for you are in the holy valley, Tuwa. I Myself have chosen you, so hearken to what is revealed. Verily I, I am God, there is no god except I. So worship Me and perform the prayer for My Remembrance'" (Q. 20: 9ff.). See also Q. 28: 29ff. It is worth noting that the account in the Quran indicates that Moses' staff, which he took up the mountain with him, was transmuted in the Divine fire into a living thing. After removing it from the fire, he brought it down as the "firebrand" which would demonstrate to Pharaoh the meaning of the One Living God. Moses' staff is, for Ibn ʿArabī, a direct symbol of the *alif* (see Appendix D).

Lines 21–3 This refers to the Divine Speech to Moses from the Burning Bush: three times the Divine 'I' is mentioned (I am your Lord; I have chosen you; I am God), and three times in one sentence (*innanī ana Allāh lā ilāha illā ana*). According to Ibn ʿArabī, three is the first "singular" or odd number (*fard*), and is directly linked to Muhammad. See the chapter of the Wisdom of Singularity (*fardāniyya*) in the Word of Muhammad in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*.

Lines 33–4 "Glory be to Him, in whose Hand is the kingdom of all things, and unto whom you shall be returned" (Q. 36: 84).

Line 36 "Say: 'Who sent down the Book that Moses brought as a light and guidance to men? You put it into parchments, revealing them and hiding much; and you were taught what you did not know, you and your fathers.' Say: 'God'. Then leave them alone to play with their discussions" (Q. 6: 91). In *Fut.* IV: 141–2, Ibn ʿArabī describes this final phrase as being the invocation (*hijjīr*) peculiar to Abū Madyan, explaining that the word "them" refers to the Divine Names. Each of them strives to manifest their own rulership (*ḥukm*) and discusses their own merits with the others. The verse then means: let them play with each other, and turn yourself exclusively to the Name *Allāh*, which unites all the Names.

Line 37 Q. 3: 2. Concerning the three initial letters of this Sura, see *Fut.* I: 61 (translated by Gril in *Meccan Illuminations*, p. 461). The Quranic verses quoted here and in the above note give particular prominence to the Name *Allāh*.

Lines 46–7 See Sūrat al-Inshirāḥ: "Have We not expanded your breast for you, and lifted (*waḍaʿnā*) from you your burden, the burden which has weighed down your back? Have We not raised high your remembrance (*rafaʿnā laka dhikraka*)? Truly with every hardship comes ease (*yusran*), truly with hardship ease" (Q. 94: 1–6).

Lines 54–5 Allusion to the hadith: "I call the seven heavens and the seven earths as witness for You" (Ibn Ḥanbal V.135). The word *shuhūd* has both the meaning of "witness" and "vision–contemplation".

Lines 58–9 Referring to the Night of Power in the Sūrat al-Qadr: "The angels and the spirit descend in it by permission of their Lord, with every command" (Q. 97: 4). This line is said to be a formula for recitation, given by the Prophet to his daughter Fatima. It is the Islamic counterpart of the biblical Trisagion, the thrice-repeated invocation of holiness which is sung in the Eastern Church: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, is and is to come." (Rev. 4: 8; see also Isa. 6: 3.)

Line 59 This imagery recalls the verse: "He brought down those of the People of the Book who supported them from their fortresses and cast terror into their hearts" (Q. 33: 26). See p. 82, lines 9–10.

Line 60 Allusion to the story of Moses: "… when We divided the sea for you and delivered you, and drowned the hosts of Pharaoh while you were looking on" (Q. 2: 49).

Lines 61–2 Q. 113: 3 and 5.

Lines 66–7 This line is a kind of commentary on Q. 27: 62: "He who answers the constrained (*al-muḍṭarr*) when he calls unto Him, and removes the evil and appoints you as successors of the earth. Is there a god with God? Little indeed do you remember." The last part also quotes the verse: "We gave Moses the Book and made it a guidance to the Children of Israel: take not for yourselves anyone to put trust in, other than Me" (Q. 17: 2).

Lines 69–72 These terms are all allusions to Quranic passages that specifically mention the Name *Allāh*: for example, see Q. 4: 113 ("bring down", *anzala*), Q. 14: 7 ("grateful", *shukr*), Q. 14: 5 and 5: 16 ("darkness", *ẓulumāt*) and Q. 22: 52 ("dismiss", *nasakha*).

Lines 77–8 Allusion to the verse: "To Him belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth; unto Him are all matters returned. He makes the night enter into the day, and the day enter into the night" (Q. 57: 5).

Line 78 See the verse: "Assuredly We are able to show thee that which We promise them. Repel thou the evil with that which is fairer" (Q. 23: 97).

Wednesday Morning Prayer

Lines 1–2 Allusion to the verse: "They say: the All-Compassionate has taken a son. Glory be to Him! Nay, they are but honoured servants (*ʿibād mukramūn*) that outstrip Him not in speech, and act as He commands" (Q. 21: 26). This is a clear reference to Jesus, whose day this is. Throughout this prayer we find many instances drawn from Sura 21 (al-Anbiyā', "The Prophets"). It concerns the message delivered by the Envoys and the subsequent judgement of God over their peoples, delivering the people of faith and destroying the unbelievers. This Divine judgement is particularly associated with the function of Jesus at his Second Coming.

Line 4 The word "turned" or "turned about" (*taqallab*) is often used by Ibn ʿArabī to mean the way the heart (*qalb*, from the same root) is moved according to the way God reveals Himself. It is this fluctuation or variability which is the primary characteristic of the heart. See *Fut.* II: 198 or *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Arabic, pp. 120–2; *Fusus*, pp. 608–9; *Bezels*, pp. 149–50.

Line 8 Literally "the worlds of the kingdom and the kingship" (*mulk wa-malakūt*).

Line 10 These two aspects, Divine nature and human nature, are precisely what has given rise to confusion in the manifestation of Jesus. See the chapter of the Wisdom of Elevation in the Word of Jesus in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*.

Line 11 An allusion to the fact that Jesus is the Seal of Universal Sainthood, whose wisdom encompasses all the conditions of saintliness. See, for example, *Fut.* II: 9, and Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*, Chapter 8.

Line 16 See the verse where people complained: "Let him [Muhammad] bring us a Sign, just like the former prophets were sent" (Q. 21: 5), and also the verse: "We breathed into her [Mary] of Our Spirit and We made of her and her son a Sign for all beings" (verse 91).

Line 18 "We bestowed upon Abraham his right conduct before" (Q. 21: 51).

Line 20 Hadith (*Concordance*, vol. V, p. 459).

Line 21 Sura 21 refers to no less than four prophets, who after being in great distress had their prayers answered. For example, Noah: "We answered him, and delivered him and his people from the great distress (*al-karb al-ʿaẓīm*)."

Lines 21–2 This phrase is found twice in Sura 5, al-Mā'ida. The first time it is uttered by all the Envoys when questioned on the Day of Judgement: "The day when

We shall gather the Envoys and say: 'What answer were you given?' and they shall say: 'We have no knowledge; Thou art the One who knows all that is unseen" (Q. 5: 109). The second time it is uttered by Jesus himself when questioned by God: "Thou art the One who knows all that is unseen; I only said to them what Thou didst command me" (Q. 5: 116).

Line 34 One of three phrases in this part of the prayer that recall the closing verses of the Sūra al-Baqara (Q. 2: 285–6), where it is affirmed that no distinction should be made between any of His Envoys and where the following prayer is given for all people of faith: "Our Lord, *take us not to task* if we forget, or make mistake. Our Lord, charge us not with a load such as Thou didst lay upon those before us. Our Lord, do not Thou burden us beyond what we have the strength to bear. *Absolve us*, and *forgive us*, and have mercy on us."

Lines 36–7 See the verse in reference to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: "Indeed We purified them with a quality most pure, the remembrance of the Abode" (Q. 38: 46).

Line 39 Throughout Sura 21, there are numerous references to the prophets being righteous (*sāliḥ*). In addition there are two verses referring the same quality to others: "Whoever does deeds of righteousness, being a believer, no unthankfulness shall befall his endeavour; We Ourselves write it down for him" (verse 94) and "My righteous servants shall inherit the earth" (verse 105).

Lines 40–1 "And Dhū'l-Nūn [Jonah] – when he went forth enraged and thought that We would have no power over him; then he called out in the darknesses: 'There is no god but You. Glory be to You, indeed I have been one of the oppressors.' So We answered him, and delivered him out of affliction; thus do We deliver the believers" (Q. 21: 87).

Line 41 Referring to the verse: "Call to mind Job when he called on his Lord: I have been afflicted with distress, and You are the Most Merciful of the mercifiers. So We answered him and removed the distress that was upon him, and We gave him his family and the like of them with them, as a mercy from Us and as a reminder for the adorers" (Q. 21: 83). This phrase is also found in the prayer of Moses: "He said: O my Lord, forgive me and my brother [Aaron], and enter us into Your Mercy; You are the Most Merciful of the mercifiers" (Q. 7: 151).

Thursday Eve Prayer

The two letters of this prayer are: *bā'*, as in *sabab* (cause), *qalb* (heart), *tartīb* (arranging), *badīʿ* (inventor), *bāqī* (enduring), *bāʿith* (instigating), *bāṭin* (interior), *bāsiṭ* (expander) and *baraka* (blessing); and *thā'*, as in *thābit* (firmly established) and *muthabbit* (reassuring).

Lines 10–11 This is a beautiful example of Ibn ʿArabī's complex understanding of letters and their symbolism. The word *ʿayn* can mean either "essence", "source" or "eye", or refer to the letter of the alphabet of the same name. Here it stands for the essential

reality of the contemplative. The only difference in writing between the letter *ʿayn* and the letter *ghayn* is a dot. When the letter *ghayn* is written, it may be understood as an *ʿayn* which has been veiled by a dot, since as a word, *ghayn* also means a "cloud" which obscures. It also indicates a separation (*ghayr*) from Reality. Thus the knowledge of causation allows the eye of the contemplative to see clearly without any obscurity.

Lines 12–15 This part of the prayer is an allusion to the famous story of the Sleepers in the verses: "Do you deem the People of the Cave (*kahf*) and the Inscription (*raqīm*) to be among Our Signs a wonder? When the youths took refuge in the Cave, they said: 'Our Lord, grant us Mercy from You and furnish us with true guidance in our affair'. Then We smote their ears (*ādhān*) many years in the Cave" (Q. 18: 10ff.). These youths are traditionally associated with the Sleepers of Ephesus, the early followers of Jesus who took refuge in the Cave from the mass persecutions of Christians at their time. They are reputed to have remained there asleep for hundreds of years. The physical detachment of the Sleepers from this world is thus a potent symbol of the complete inner detachment of the contemplative. As Ibn ʿArabī points out in Chapter 205 of the *Futūḥāt*: "The seekers, not knowing who is the Manifest and the Witnessed and who is the world, have chosen retreat in order to be alone with God. Since the multiplicity witnessed in existence veils them from God, they have inclined to withdrawal" (*Fut.* II: 484). He adds that if they knew the real situation, they would witness Him in all things. He also refers to this in the *Ḥilyat al-Abdāl*: "There are two kinds of seclusion. Firstly the seclusion of the aspirants, which consists of not associating with others physically; and secondly the seclusion of the verifiers, which consists of having no contact with created things in one's heart."

Lines 17–18 Allusion to the hadith: "We are through Him and for Him" (*naḥnu bihi wa lahu*). See *SDG*, p. 441.

Lines 27–8 See the verse: "[Bilqis, Queen of Sheba,] said: O Council, see, an honourable letter has been brought to me. It is from Solomon and it is 'In the Name of God, the All-Compassionate and Most Merciful. Rise not up against me, but come to me in surrender'" (Q. 27: 30). The word "it" in the Quranic account refers to Solomon's letter (*kitāb*), a word that in other contexts usually means the Book (of the Quran). The use of this quotation here indicates that the Divine blessing is from God and to God, and/or from your "Solomon" to your "Bilqis".

Lines 28–30 Q. 2: 117. Ibn ʿArabī explains the creation of things in the following way: "A thing's being brought into existence means that it becomes a place of manifestation for God. This is what is meant by 'and it becomes'. It does not mean that it acquires existence; it only acquires the property of being a place of manifestation" (*Fut.* II: 484).

Lines 40–1 Allusion to the *ḥadīth qudsī* in which God Himself says: "Pride/Grandeur is My mantle, and Majesty My girdle. Whoever wrestles with Me over either of these, I shall cast into the fire" (*Mishkāt*, no. 15).

Line 44 Reference to the verse: "Upon the day when the first blast shivers and the second follows it, hearts on that day shall flutter and eyes shall be lowered" (Q. 79: 9).

Lines 45–6 See the verse: "That was ʿAd: they denied the signs of their Lord, and rebelled against His Messengers, and followed the command of every obstinate tyrant" (Q. 11: 60).

Line 46 See the verse: "Among men there is such that dispute concerning God without knowledge and follow every rebellious satan, against whom it is written down that whosoever takes him as a friend, him he leads astray, and he guides him to the chastisement of the burning" (Q. 22: 3).

Line 46 Referring to the verse: "There is no creature that crawls, but He takes it by the forelock. Surely my Lord is on a straight path" (Q. 11: 56).

Thursday Morning Prayer

Line 5 The words "You have singularised Yourself" (*tafarradta*) are used here in contrast to the Aloneness of the Divine Unity. The root *fard* in Ibn ʿArabī's thought corresponds to the number 3 and implies a triplicity of aspects within Oneness: for example, knower, known and knowledge, or lover, beloved and love. See *K. al-Mīm wa'l-Wāw wa'l-Nūn*, pp. 3–4.

Line 8 The expression *iyyāka* occurs twice in the Quran, in the fifth verse of the Fātiḥa, referring to the divine You: "It is You alone whom we adore; and it is You alone whom we ask for aid (*iyyāka naʿbudu wa iyyāka nastaʿīn*). The two *iyyāka*-s may correspond to the two expressions in the next phrase of the prayer (with You and in You).

Lines 14–15 This is reminiscent of the Quranic account where Moses prayed: "Lord, cause me to see that I may look upon You", to which God replied: "'You will not see Me, but look at the mountain: if it stays firmly in place, then you will see Me.' So when his Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, He made it crushed flat; and Moses fell down stunned" (Q. 7: 143). This constitutes the extinction in contemplation par excellence. For a full discussion of this, see "The Vision of God according to Ibn ʿArabī" by Michel Chodkiewicz in *Prayer & Contemplation*, pp. 53–67.

Line 26 See the verse: "Surely it is He who originates and brings again, and He is the All-Forgiving, the Loving, Lord of the Throne, the Glorious, the One who accomplishes what He desires" (Q. 85: 16).

Line 27 Referring to the verse: "… one among Our servants, upon whom We had bestowed Mercy from Us, and whom We had taught knowledge from Our private Knowledge" (Q. 18: 64). This is a reference to Khiḍr, whom tradition takes as the companion of Moses in the Quranic story (Q. 18: 60ff.).

Lines 33–4 Or "manifest to every eye" (*ʿayn*). The contrast here is between the non-manifest (*ghayb*), which implies being veiled from perception, and the perceptible or perceiving reality.

Lines 36–7 Literally, the "Names of descent" (*asmāʾ al-nuzūl*), which signify the

Names by which God has named Himself in revelation. These Names are not established arbitrarily by human intelligence or reasoning. See *Fut.* II: 232.

Lines 41–2 Ibn ʿArabī distinguishes two kinds of Divine Names: the primordial Names themselves and the Names of the Names, composed of letters. See, for example, *Fut.* II: 122, II: 684 and IV: 214.

Line 47 In terms of its Arabic root, the word "Syriac" (*suryānī*) alludes to the ideas of permeation and diffusion (*sarayān*) and the night-journey (*isrā'*), as well as to secret or mystery (*sirr*). It equally derives from the Sanskrit *surya*, which means "sun". It refers to a primordial "solar" language, considered by Islamic tradition to have been the one spoken by Adam in Paradise. In the *Futūḥāt* (II: 690ff.) Ibn ʿArabī links the Syriac station (*al-maqām al-suryānī*) to the original Adamic nature of Man.

Lines 50–2 This alludes to the hadith concerning God's Self-transmutation in forms. In his commentary on this hadith, Ibn ʿArabī writes: "At the Resurrection the Truth will reveal Himself and say: 'I am your Lord.' They will see Him, but nevertheless they will deny Him and not acknowledge Him as their Lord, despite the fact that they are actually seeing Him because the veil has been lifted. When He transmutes Himself for them into the sign by which they do recognise Him, they will say to Him: 'Thou art our Lord.' And yet He is the very One whom they were denying and seeking refuge from, just as much as He is the One whom they acknowledged and recognised." (*Fut.* III: 540–1, translated in *SDG*, p. 215.)

Lines 57–61 See the verse: "And listen thou for the day (*yawm*) when the Caller shall call from a near place" (Q. 50: 42). The root *n–d–w* ("to call") implies an open address or announcement from a distance, and this Quranic verse refers to the day when this "normal" situation is reversed. The root *n–j–w* ("to confide"), on the other hand, suggests a private, intimate converse in the security of closeness. These two aspects form Moses' question to God in a well-known hadith (quoted in *Mishkāt*, no. 43):

"O Lord, are You distant that I should call out to You? Or are You near that I should confide in you?"

God replied: "I keep company with him who remembers Me, and I am with him."

[Moses] asked: "What is the work You love most, O Lord?"

He replied, "That you propagate My Remembrance in every state."

Lines 62–5 Compare this with the following passage from the Chapter on Noah in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*: "For the person of perplexity and wonderment (*ḥayra*) there is turning, and the circular movement of turning is always around the Pole [or centre of the circle] from which he never departs. The person of the protracted Way [on the other hand] is always turning aside from the [true] aim and intention, seeking [elsewhere] what is [actually already] within him, taking what he has imagined as his goal. Such a one has a starting-point [a "from"] and a destination [a "to"] and whatever lies between them, while for the man of circular movement there is no beginning that he has to keep to nor end that can impose upon him, since he possesses the most complete being and has been granted the totality of the Words and Wisdoms" (Arabic text, p. 73; *Fusus*, pp. 314–16; *Bezels*, p. 79).

Line 64 “And recognition the seat of non-recognition.” This also may be translated as “the definite is the seat of the indefinite”, referring to a grammatical contrast.

Lines 71–2 Q. 32: 7.

Lines 75–6 There is a play in the original Arabic on two words from the same root, intellect (*ʿaql*) and bonds (*ʿiqāl*). The intellect is the faculty that “bonds” things together.

Lines 85–6 Q. 11: 123. As is mentioned in the verse, “There is no creature that crawls but that He takes it by the forelock. Surely my Lord is on a straight Path” (Q. 11: 56), which Ibn ʿArabī interprets as meaning that all beings, obedient or disobedient, are on the straight path. Compare with the following passage from the Chapter of Hūd in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*: “There are two kinds of people: one who walk upon a path, knowing it and being aware of its appointed end, and that in fact it is a straight path; the other group walk upon a path, ignorant of it and its appointed end, and yet it is the very same path which the first group know.” (Arabic text, p. 108; *Bezels*, p. 132.)

Lines 113–14 Q. 60: 5. This is the prayer of Abraham and his people.

Lines 115–20 It should be noted that this passage refers to all the seven essential attributes of the Divine Self: Life, Knowledge, Power, Will, Speech (here mentioned as Order and Decree, as in the word “Be”), Seeing and Hearing.

Lines 118–19 In his *Kashf* (nos. 27–8) Ibn ʿArabī asks for the permeation (*nufūdh*) of these two faculties in an unlimited manner (*iṭlāq*).

Lines 121–2 The combination of Names here suggest two Quranic passages: “He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden” (Q. 57: 4), and “On that day God shall pay them in full their just due, and they shall know that God is the Truth, the Most Evident” (Q. 24: 25).

Lines 127–28 This kind of science is specific to Khiḍr.

Lines 134–6 There is an implicit reference in the Arabic terms *darakāt* (descending steps) and *darajāt* (ascending steps) to the idiomatic expression: *darajāt al-ḥayāt wa darakāt al-mawt* (“the ascent of life and the descent of death”).

Lines 137–38 Q. 1: 4.

Line 142 The Highest Assembly is that of the Angels round the Throne, described in the verse: “We have adorned the lower heaven with the adornment of the stars, and to preserve against every rebellious satan; they listen not to the High Assembly” (Q. 37: 8). There is also an implicit reference to the famous hadith: “If someone remembers Me in himself, I remember him in Myself; if someone remembers me in a company (assembly), I remember him in a better company than that” (*Mishkāt*, no. 27).

Line 143 Literally: “… by which You fortify the oil of my lamplight”.

Friday Eve Prayer

The two letters of this prayer are: *jīm* as in *jamʿ* (uniting), *jalāl* (majesty) and *jamāl* (beauty); and *khā'*, as in *khāliq* (creator), *khadama* (attendants), *khilāfa* (vicegerency), *khawf* (fear) and *khabīr* (fully aware). *Jīm* is also associated with the Arabic term for Friday, *yawm al-jumʿa* (the day of coming-together), when the community gathers for prayer.

Line 1 The letter *jīm* is associated by Ibn ʿArabī with the starless sphere, the highest of the celestial spheres, which are collectively "the high fathers". See *Futūḥāt*, Chapter 11: "On the knowledge of our high fathers and low mothers". This letter manifests the Divine Name *al-Ghanī* (the Rich, the Independent), and, as it has the numerical value of 3, is considered to be the first of the stations of Singularity (*fardāniyya*). See *Futūḥāt*, Chapter 198, summarised in *SDG*, pp. xxixff.

Lines 21–3 Allusion to the words of Hūd: "Truly I have put my trust in God, my Lord and your Lord; there is no creature that crawls, but He takes it by the forelock. Surely my Lord is on a straight Path" (Q. 11: 59).

Line 24 See the verse: "My Lord, give me Judgement, and join me with the righteous, and grant me a tongue of veracity among the others" (Q. 26: 84).

Line 26 A reference to Q. 17: 70: "We have honoured the children of Adam and carried them upon land and sea."

Lines 26–7 See the verse: "Our Lord, bring us forth from this city whose inhabitants are oppressors, and appoint for us a protector from Thee, and appoint for us a helper" (Q. 4: 75). This was the plea of the Muslims in Mecca at the time of great persecution, when they asked for help from the Prophet and the people of Medina.

Lines 35–6 "You comfort and mend…" (*tajburu*) and "tyrants" (*jabbārūn*) both come from the same root. In the *Kashf* (no. 10: 2), Ibn ʿArabī explains that the Divine Name *al-Jabbār* (the One who compels one to recognise the Source) derives from the first form of the root *j–b–r*, rather than from the fourth form. Thus he takes it to mean "the One who re-establishes, brings together, restores, mends and comforts" as well as "the One who forces and compels". The latter meaning is also used to describe those who force others, the oppressors, the unjust and tyrannical who are vilified in the Quran. The same root is found in the name of the Angel of Revelation, Gabriel (*Jibrīl*), who may be understood as the one who "mends" the previous revelations by re-establishing the original message. Equally he is related to the realm of *jabarūt*, the isthmus between the world of meanings and the world of forms. Thus he is an imaginal being who has the power to bring together the two sides. See *Fut.* II: 129 for the definition of the term *jabarūt* and *Fut.* IV: 325 on the Divine Name *al-Qawī* (the Mighty).

Lines 39–40 Q. 3: 173.

Lines 41–4 Q. 11: 103 and 30: 48.

Lines 52–3 "The One to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, has not taken a son nor has He a partner in the kingdom. He has created each thing, ordaining its destiny" (Q. 25: 2). See *Kashf*, no. 12: 2 (and n. 3, p. 78) for a discussion of the three stages of ordainment (*taqdīr*) in the process of creation.

Line 54 Referring to the verse: "God has guarded them from the evil of that day, and has procured for them radiancy and gladness. For their steadfastness God shall reward them with a garden and a raiment of silk" (Q. 76: 12).

Line 55 Referring to the verse: "When thou seest them, then thou seest bliss and a great kingdom. Upon them shall be green garments of silk and brocade; they are adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Lord shall give them to drink a pure draught" (Q. 76: 20).

Lines 57–8 An allusion to the verse: "He taught Adam all the Names" (Q. 2: 31). Compare with the following: "When the angel came to the Prophet with a ruling (of Law) or knowledge given through notification, the human spirit encountered this [angelic] form and they met, with one giving ear and the other dictating (*ilqā'*), and these are two lights" (*Fut.* III: 39).

Lines 63–4 Q. 16: 51.

Line 69 Q. 3: 26.

Lines 69–70 "Surely God is Fully Aware, All-Seeing of His servants" (Q. 35: 31).

Friday Morning Prayer

Unlike the other prayers, the mode of address here is simply Lord (*rabb*): my Lord, Lord of all beings, Lord of lords.

Line 5 "There are four kinds of thought (*khawāṭir*): lordly, psychic, angelic and satanic. Lordly thought gives you knowledge of secrets, sciences and states. Psychic thought incites you to accomplish that which involves neither good nor evil for you … Satanic thought will drive you to perpetrate that which will cause you sorrow in the dwelling-place of the Hereafter, whereas angelic thought prescribes for you that which will be the cause of happiness in your final resting-place." These are the words of Ibn ʿArabī according to his disciple, al-Ḥabashī (*JMIAS*, vol. XV, p. 13).

Lines 5–6 Allusion to the famous hadith of the veils: "God has seventy veils of light and darkness; were they to be removed, the Glories of His Face would burn away whatever His Sight perceives of His creatures." See *Fut.* II: 80. For other references, see Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 401 (Ch. 11, n. 19).

Line 14 Allusion to the verse: "Though all the trees in the earth were pens, and the seas – seven seas after it to replenish it, yet would the Words of God not be spent" (Q. 31: 27). The *alif* is detached in written Arabic from any succeeding letter, and this graphic isolation symbolises the detachment and sanctity of the Divine Essence

from all manifestation. The *alif* also represents the Pen of the First Intellect, which "writes" upon the Tablet of the Universal Soul.

Line 16 *ʿAjama* means "to punctuate" or "to provide with diacritical points", as well as "to obscure". These attachments punctuate and obscure awareness.

Line 17 Literally, "… closes the door (*bāb*)". As the general tone of this passage is describing the idiom of writing, it seems more appropriate to speak of "chapter", which is another meaning of *bāb*.

Line 17 *Hayūlā* usually means "primordial matter", but here it also suggests the unlimited ink (*midād*) which fills the Pen and is the means for the letters to come into existence. Perfect Man is the inkwell, through which the Pen gives form to the letters of created beings.

Lines 22–3 Q. 40: 7.

Line 36 Referring to the verse where Joseph is apparently speaking: "Yet I do not claim that my soul was innocent, for the soul ever commands to wrongdoing, except that my Lord had mercy. Indeed my Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (Q. 12: 53).

Lines 37–8 See the verse: "Thou seest not in the creation of the All-Compassionate any imperfection. Look again: do you see any fissure? Then look again, and yet again; your sight will be turned back to you, enfeebled and weary" (Q. 67: 4).

Line 39 "All faces submit to the Living, the Self-Subsisting" (Q. 20: 111).

Line 52 In the Arabic word *kun* ("Be") the two letters *kāf* and *nūn* are linked together, and the *wāw* of the lexical root (*k–w–n*) is hidden and implicit – it only appears as a vowel. In the word *yakūnu* ("it becomes", in the Quranic quotation) the *wāw* (as "*ū*") appears in writing explicitly. In the same way, the *wāw* also appears when things are created through the Divine Command (creation = *kawn*). Elsewhere he refers to the *wāw* as the symbol of the Perfect Man, uniting God and His Creation. See Appendix D for a more detailed description of the secrets of the *wāw*.

For this particular phrase, see *Fut.* II: 632 (poem) and the poem of Abū Madyan (translated in Cornell, *The Way of Abū Madyan*, p. 150):

> Your Command subsists between the *kāf* and the *nūn*,
> executed more swiftly and easily than the blink of an eye.

Lines 53–5 Q. 36: 82.

Saturday Eve Prayer

The two letters of this prayer are *dāl*, as in *dāma* (endure, be permanent), *daʿwa* (invite) and *dalla* (indicate); and *ṣād*, as in *ṣifa* (attribute), *ṣirf* (sheer), *ṣidq* (truthfulness) and *ṣamad* (universal support).

Line 4 Allusion to part of the famous Āyat al-Kursī: "His Footstool extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them burdens Him not" (Q. 2: 255).

Lines 16–17 A possible allusion to the verse: "My Friend and Patron is God, who has revealed the Book and has taken charge of the righteous" (Q. 7: 197).

Line 17 Referring to the verse: "Your Lord has said: 'Call upon me and I shall answer you'" (Q. 40: 60).

Lines 25–6 Q. 55: 78 and 6: 60.

Line 41 Allusion to the verse: "It is He who made the sun a radiance and the moon a light, and ordained the stations that you might know the number of years and the reckoning" (Q. 10: 5). The "stations" or mansions of the moon correspond to the twenty-eight days of the lunar cycle, which are determined by the relation between the two lights of the sun and the moon. The degrees of the beneficial thus describe the visible aspect of the moon, reflected radiance of the sun, while the degrees of the harmful describe the dark side of the moon, that which is hidden from us. Each phase of the moon displays a different degree of light and absence of light. This passage can equally be read from the perspective of the individual: the "stations" or "spiritual abodes" are the stopping-places on the spiritual Path (this inspired the title of the famous *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn* by ʿAbdullāh al-Anṣārī al-Harawī). The word *manāzil* (abodes) is for Ibn ʿArabī a complex term. He devotes a whole section to them in the *Futūḥāt*. See Chodkiewicz, *An Ocean without Shore*, p. 65.

Line 52 "My Lord, give me authority and join me with the righteous; grant me a tongue of veracity among the others" (Q. 26: 84).

Line 54 Allusion to the hadith of the Prophet: "I was sent with the all-inclusive Words" (Bukhārī, *Jihād* 122).

Lines 56–7 "Say: This is my way. I call to God according to inner vision, I and those who follow me" (Q. 12: 109).

Lines 62–3 See the verse: "Do you not see that God has subjected to you whatever is in the earth, and the vessels sail upon the sea by His Command, and He upholds the heaven lest it should fall upon the earth save by His permission? Indeed God is Indulgent and Most Merciful to mankind" (Q. 22: 65). Also see: "He taught Adam all the Names" (Q. 2: 32).

Lines 64–5 From the Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ (Q. 112).

Saturday Morning Prayer

Line 1 Q. 3: 102.

Lines 2–15 This is a set of seven praises on the seventh day, which is associated with Abraham, the intimate friend of God and model of hospitality. These seven praises describe how the servant is welcomed as an honoured guest, from being admitted into the presence of the Friend to being given spiritual food, drink and clothes to wear.

Lines 4–5 This may allude to the prayer of Moses: "My Lord, forgive me and my brother, and admit us into Your Compassion, and You are the Most Merciful of those who show Mercy" (Q. 7: 151). This is also referred to as a garden of Paradise in the verse: "It was said: 'Enter the Garden!' and he said: 'Would that my people knew how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honoured'" (Q. 36: 26).

Lines 6–7 Divine Love (*maḥabba*) is mentioned only once in the Quran, in connection with Moses' being looked after when he was a baby: "I gave you Love from Me, that you might be brought up in My Sight" (Q. 20: 39).

Lines 8–9 Allusion to the prayer of Jesus: "Jesus son of Mary prayed: 'O God, our Lord, send down to us a Table, spread with food, from heaven, that shall be a festival for the first of us and the last of us, and a Sign from You. Nourish us, for You are the best of Nourishers" (Q. 5: 114).

Lines 10–11 The Divine Preference alludes to various Quranic passages: "God preferred Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham and the family of Imran, exalting them above all beings" (Q. 3: 33); "Say: 'Praise be to God and peace be upon His servants whom He has chosen" (Q. 27: 59); and "Remember also Our servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – men of power and vision. We purified them with the purity of the remembrance of the Abode, and for Us they are of the chosen, the best" (Q. 38: 45–7). This praise recalls specifically the prayer of Abraham: "Praise be to God who has bestowed upon me Ishmael and Isaac" (Q. 14: 39).

Lines 12–13 The word *wafā'* (fulfilment) has the sense of redeeming a promise or discharging one's obligations. There may be an allusion here to the story of Moses watering the flocks of the women at the wells of Midian, and then fulfilling his pledges to Jethro (Shuʿayb). See Q. 28: 23ff.

Line 16 Referring to "Lest any soul should say, alas for me, in what I have squandered of the Divine side, and I have been one of the scoffers" (Q. 39: 56).

Lines 17–18 Q. 4: 71 and 3: 136.

Lines 29–30 Q. 42: 20.

Lines 37–8 See Q. 38: 47, quoted in note on lines 10–11.

Lines 39–40 Twice in the Quran there is mention of the attestation of Unity (*tawḥīd*) followed by the Lord who is seated (*istiwā'*) upon the Throne: "Exalted be God, the King, the True Reality. There is no god but He, Lord of the Throne, the Magnanimous" (Q. 23: 116), and "God, there is no god but He, Lord of the Throne, the Magnificent" (Q. 27: 26).

Lines 47–51 Q. 81: 17–22 and 26: 195. Ibn ʿArabī understands Arabic to mean not simply a physical language but the language of clarity. See *Fut.* III: 517.

Line 51 Q. 26: 192.

Lines 52–4 This whole sentence is extremely allusive: the one who pronounces judgement (*muḥkim*) could refer either to the Prophet or to God Himself.

Line 54 The Exposition (*tabyīn*) is an implicit reference to the Quran (which is known as the Clarification, *al-bayān*, from the same root). The external forms of the Divine Exposition may refer to either the Book itself or the universe or the Perfect Man. See *Al-Muʿjam al-ṣūfī* by Suʿād al-Ḥakīm, pp. 903–8.

Line 61 See the verse: "Put your trust in God; indeed you are according to the most clear Truth" (Q. 27: 80).

Lines 65–7 Q. 37: 180–3.

APPENDICES

A

Time according to Ibn ʿArabī's *Ayyām al-sha'n*

The circle of Time

The most evident symbol of Unity is a circle or sphere. It is an undivided whole. Every point on the circumference of a circle or on the surface of a sphere is identical to every other, since they have the same relationship to the centre. Ibn ʿArabī depicts the Divine Throne, which contains the whole of manifestation, and upon which the All-Compassionate is seated, as a circle encompassing all the degrees of existence.

Likewise, when we consider the passage of Time as circular, we are considering it as symbolic of Unity. Whether it be a year of 12 months, a lunar month of 28 days, a week of 7 days or a day of 24 hours, each of these is a complete cycle that endlessly repeats itself in a "circular" movement. Each division, whether into 12 or 7 or 24, expresses specific truths about the Whole. Inaccuracies in the lunar or solar calendars, which require the addition of extra months or days every three or four years, do not affect the symbolic nature of the cycle.

Time-cycles, indeed all cycles insofar as they are whole, can also be considered in a sense totally equivalent to each other. It is this "horizontal" correspondence that allows some of the most profound insights into the order of the universe. According to Ibn ʿArabī, there are 28 degrees of existence which correspond to the 28 mansions of the moon and the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet. Described by 28 Divine Names, they are ranked in descending order from the very principle of order itself, which is called the Pen or the First Intellect, to that which englobes the whole in a

synthetic manner (*al-jāmiʿ*), the Perfect Man, who knows the entire structure of the hierarchy of existence.[1]

Ibn ʿArabī's explanations of Time itself are presented to us, not as the result of a speculation, but primarily as insights from a contemplation of the revealed Word. His *K. Ayyām al-sha'n* is the most explicit about temporal cycles, and the interrelationship between the 24-hour day and the 7-day week. Explaining the various Quranic descriptions of day and night, Ibn ʿArabī depicts a highly original and complex view of Time. He considers the day under two fundamental aspects, physical and spiritual:

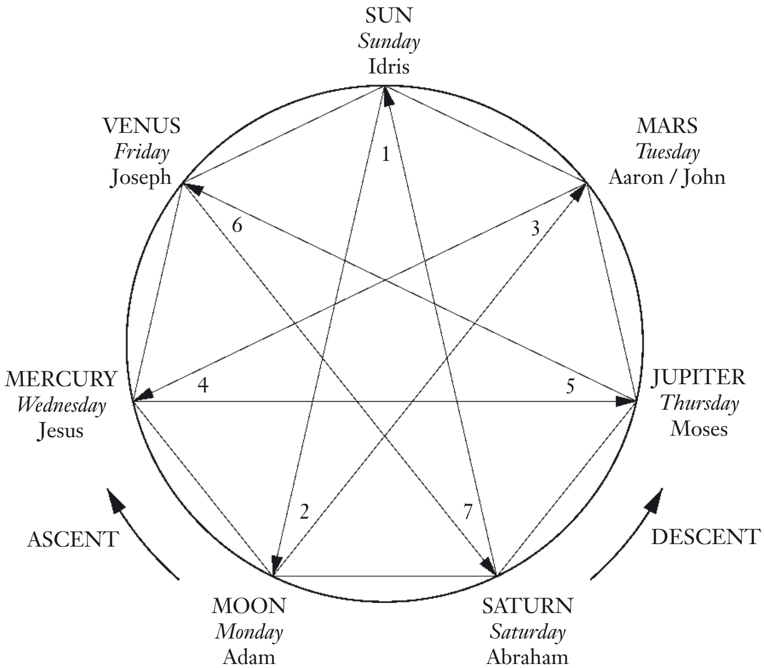
> What we mean by "day" is one complete cycle of the cycles of the sphere of the fixed stars, which contains the heavens and the earth … Every day is the final day of [a cycle of] 360 days [or 1 year] … or we can equally well say that every day actualises everything that has taken place in the 6 [prior] days [of the week], from the beginning to the end. For in one day is the ending of each of those [other] 6 days, and it necessarily contains the property of each of them. However, this remains hidden because each of these days has a particular ending in it. A day thus spans 360 degrees, because the whole sphere [of the fixed stars] is manifest in it, moving through all the degrees. This constitutes the corporeal day (*al-yawm al-jismānī*).
>
> Within it there lies a spiritual day (*yawm rūḥānī*), during which the intellect receives its knowledge, the insight its contemplation and the spirit its secrets. This is just like the way that the body receives its nourishment, growth and development, health and sickness, life and death, during the corporeal day. From the point of view of their ruling properties which manifest in the cosmos due to the active power of the Universal Soul, there are seven different days (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc.). To these [corporeal] days there correspond seven spiritual days, which are known [only] to the gnostics. These [spiritual] days have ruling properties in the spirit and intellects due to the knowing power of the Real, in whom exist the heavens and the earth, and that is the Divine Word: (*al-kalimat al-ilāhiyya*).[2]

1. For further details of this, see the chart drawn up by Titus Burckhardt in *Mystical Astrology according to Ibn ʿArabī*.

2. *Ayyām al-Sha'n*, p. 6.

The seven spheres

Ibn ʿArabī speaks of seven spheres (*aflāk)* which correspond to the seven days of the week. Each of these spheres relates to a planet and a prophetic figure, whose interrelationship can be represented in the following sevenfold diagram. Although he may have had this in mind when writing, it is never explicitly mentioned and we must emphasise that what follows is our own graphic representation.



1. The seven spheres

In Diagram 1 the seven planets are arranged around the circumference according to their arrangement in physical space: clockwise in ascending order from the Moon, and anticlockwise in descending order from Saturn. The clockwise movement depicts the way in which man experiences the heavenly order, as a rising-up from earth, while the anticlockwise movement represents the way in which the universe comes into existence, as a descent from God.

The order of the days of the week follows the internal lines of the 7-pointed star, beginning with Sunday (Day 1). When we consider the order of the days around the circumference, we find a 14-day period, or a double cycle of 7. Each step equals two days (Sunday to Tuesday, Tuesday to Thursday and so on). Two successive cycles of 14 days, corresponding to the waxing and waning of the moon, would equal a full month of 28 days.

The seven prophets (or eight, if we include John), therefore, have two separate relationships: in the first case, they are related to the order of the planets in physical space, which corresponds to the heavenly ascension (*miʿrāj*) of the Prophet Muhammad; in the second case, they are related to the order of the days in temporal space, following the lines of the 7-pointed star within the circle.

The three kinds of day

I

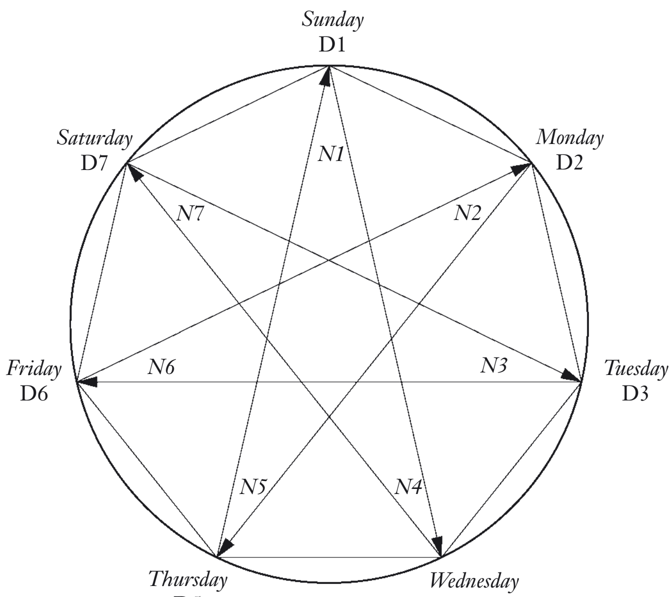
> He wraps (*yukawwiru*) the day-time around the night,
> and the night-time around the day. (Q. 39: 5)

The first kind of day is the familiar, corporeal one, where Sunday eve is followed by Sunday morning, Monday eve followed by Monday morning and so on. He calls it the cyclical day (*yawm al-takwīr*), which is how we normally view the daily or weekly round. It is an endless succession of night and day, within the pattern of the seven days of the week. Ibn ʿArabī notes that those who give precedence to the day-time over the night-time are people of the solar calendar, whilst those who give the night primacy are people of the lunar calendar.

II

> A Sign for them is the night: We detach the day-time from it and lo, they are in darkness. (Q. 36: 37)

The second kind of day is called the detached day (*yawm al-salkh*), which is only known to the gnostics. The night is still the root or principle of the day, but here the night and day have become detached from each other. The night-time or eve of one day is connected to the day-time of another day: thus Sunday eve is attached to Wednesday morning, Monday eve to Thursday morning and so on. The interval between the night and its corresponding day-time is 7 units of 4 night-times and 3 day-times. These two kinds of day can again be represented on our diagram:



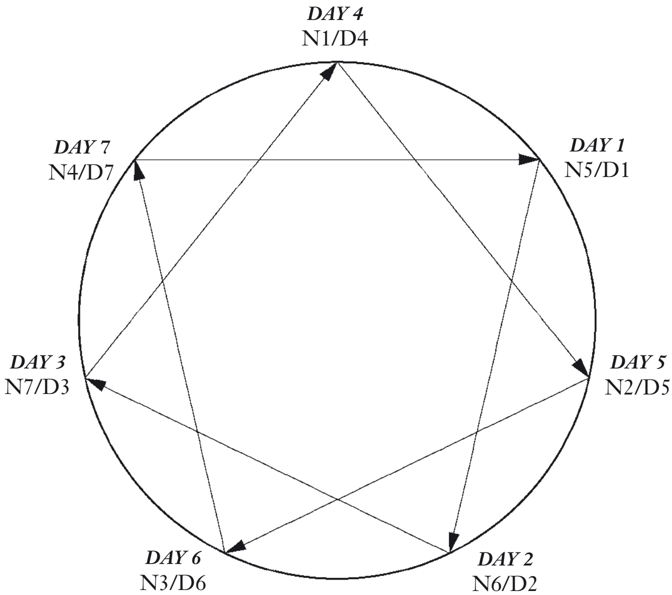
2. The cyclical day and the detached day

The ordinary, cyclical day is depicted around the circumference of the circle, starting from Sunday and moving clockwise, while the detached day may be found by following the lines of the 7-pointed star. Each night is placed within the line to show the connections, as the night is the invisible part of the day. It is thus connected to a different day along the arrowed lines. So Sunday eve (N1) links with Wednesday (Day 4), and so on. The *sha'n* (work) of the first night appears in the day-time of the fourth day.

NIGHT		DAY
Thursday eve (N5)	⟶	Sunday (D1)
Friday eve (N6)	⟶	Monday (D2)
Saturday eve (N7)	⟶	Tuesday (D3)
Sunday eve (N1)	⟶	Wednesday (D4)
Monday eve (N2)	⟶	Thursday (D5)
Tuesday eve (N3)	⟶	Friday (D6)
Wednesday eve (N4)	⟶	Saturday (D7)

If we now split the nights and days of the week and represent them separately around the circumference of another circle, we shall find the same combinations of night and day as in the table above. We begin the cycle with Night 1 (Sunday eve), followed by Day 1 (Sunday) and so on. The fourteen nights and days thus form two cycles of 7, with a night and day for each point on the circle.

These new combinations are the seven "detached" days, the first of which is N5/D1 or Thursday eve and Sunday. The "detached" days may thus be considered to form the interior pattern of the seven outer or "cyclical" days. Days, like other creatures or things, have an interior and an exterior, a visible and invisible aspect, a spirit and a body. Ibn ʿArabī describes the day-time as "the shadow of the night and according to its form". The meaning of this beautiful and poetic expression can be represented graphically in the diagrams corresponding to the third kind of day.



3. The detached days

III

"Have you not seen that God makes the night enter (interweave into the day and makes the day enter into the night?" (Q. 31: 29)

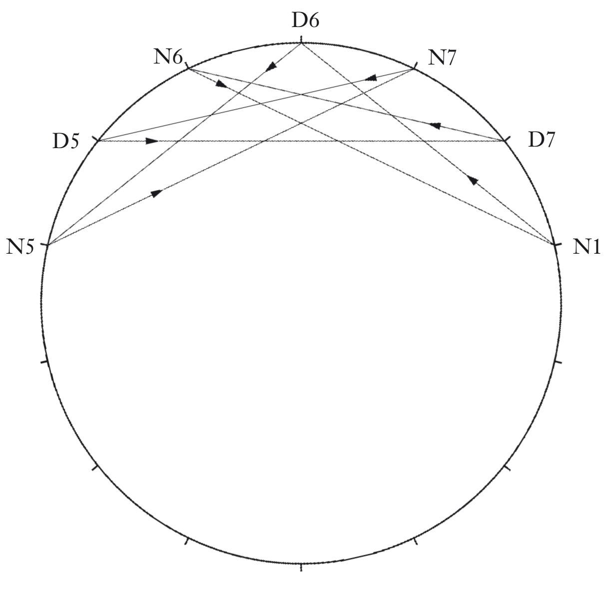
The third kind of day is called the interwoven day (*yawm al-īlāj).* Here each hour of every night and day interlock in an intricate network with hours of succeeding nights and days.

The first hour of the first detached day connects with N5, the second hour N7, the next two day-time hours D5 and D7, the next two night-time hours N6 and N1, and the 7th hour with D6, before starting the cycle again from N5. Each night includes 4 night-hours and 3 day-hours in cycles of 7, while the day, its shadow, contains 4 day-hours and 3 night-hours. It would appear that some people have read the *Awrād* with these connections in mind: one manuscript specifies, for example, that the prayer for

the "first night" is to be read in the first hour of Thursday eve, or the prayer for the "third night" is to be read in the first hour of Saturday eve.

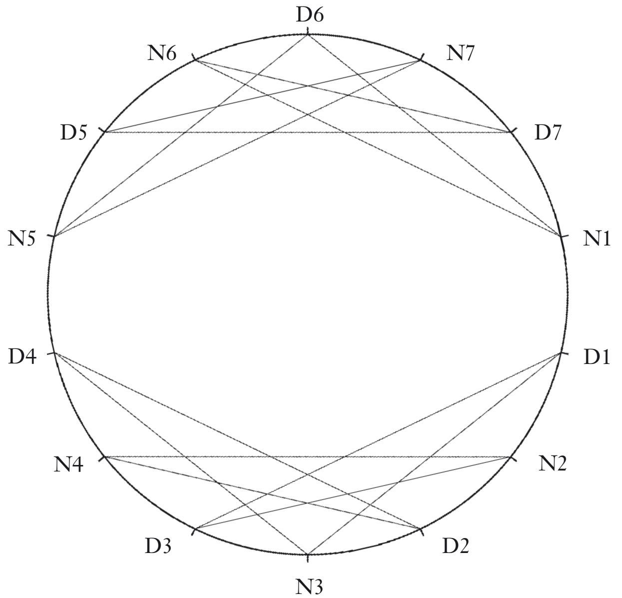
Hours of the day and night

Hrs	N5	D1	N6	D2	N7	D3	N1	D4	N2	D5	N3	D6	N4	D7
1	n5	d1	n6	d2	n7	d3	n1	d4	n2	d5	n3	d6	n4	d7
2	n7	d3	n1	d4	n2	d5	n3	d6	n4	d7	n5	d1	n6	d2
3	d5	n2	d6	n3	d7	n4	d1	n5	d2	n6	d3	n7	d4	n1
4	d7	n4	d1	n5	d2	n6	d3	n7	d4	n1	d5	n2	d6	n3
5	n6	d2	n7	d3	n1	d4	n2	d5	n3	d6	n4	d7	n5	d1
6	n1	d4	n2	d5	n3	d6	n4	d7	n5	d1	n6	d2	n7	d3
7	d6	n3	d7	n4	d1	n5	d2	n6	d3	n7	d4	n1	d5	n2
8	n5	d1	n6	d2	n7	d3	n1	d4	n2	d5	n3	d6	n4	d7
9	n7	d3	n1	d4	n2	d5	n3	d6	n4	d7	n5	d1	n6	d2
10	d5	n2	d6	n3	d7	n4	d1	n5	d2	n6	d3	n7	d4	n1
11	d7	n4	d1	n5	d2	n6	d3	n7	d4	n1	d5	n2	d6	n3
12	n6	d2	n7	d3	n1	d4	n2	d5	n3	d6	n4	d7	n5	d1



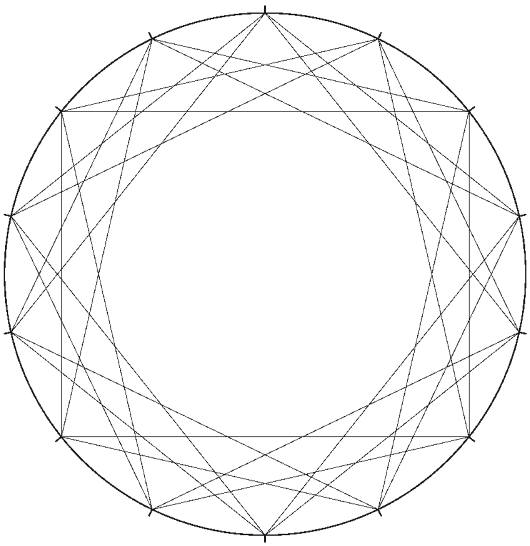
4. The interwoven hours of the 5th night (Thursday eve)

By representing the fourteen nights and days around the circumference of a circle, we can see how these hours of the interwoven day relate to each other. Yet again we see that the hours of a particular night delineate a 7-pointed star (Diagram 4).
This represents the "work" (*sha'n*) of the night, and the same applies to its corresponding day, which appears in perfect symmetry as "the shadow of the night" (Diagram 5).



5. The interwoven hours of the 1st detached day (N5 and D1)

The "work" of this whole interwoven day pervades and touches upon the entire week, so that every day interrelates with every other. Diagram 6 thus depicts graphically the perfect harmony of the interweaving of hours and days, which symbolises the Divine Work. This final diagram is a beautiful representation of the harmony (*niẓām*) underlying the succession of temporal states. In his collection of poems dedicated to the woman called Niẓām who he met in Mecca, Ibn ʿArabī celebrated the beauty manifest in "the maid of fourteen":



6. The interwoven hours of the 14 days and nights

Between Adhriʿāt and Buṣrā a maid of fourteen rose to my
sight like a full moon.
She was exalted in majesty above time and transcended it
in pride and glory.
Every full moon, when it reaches perfection, suffers a
waning that it may make a complete month,
Except this one: for she does not move through the
zodiacal signs nor double what is single.
Thou art a pyx containing blended odours and perfume;
thou art a meadow producing spring-herbs and flowers.
Beauty reached in thee her utmost limit: another like thee
is impossible.[3]

3. *Tarjumān al-ashwāq*, XL, edited and translated by R. A. Nicholson (London, 1911).

B

The creative week of the Soul

The table on the next page has been constructed from Ibn ʿArabī's descriptions in "The Days of God's Work", although some details (shown by parentheses) are not directly mentioned (even in the autograph copy) and have had to be deduced. It shows the strength of involvement of the spiritual realities of each sphere in the individual days of the Universal Soul. Thus on Sunday and Tuesday the spiritual reality of the 4th sphere or the Sun is involved in "helping the Soul" at full strength, but only at half strength on Thursday and Saturday. The underlying pattern of the "help" for the Soul is based upon an alchemical correlation between the planets of each sphere and the four elements (earth, air, fire and water), and their interactions on each day.[1] This alchemical work (*sha'n*) accounts for all the processes of transformation in the world. Each element may be considered to possess two characteristics: earth is cold and dry, water cold and moist, fire hot and dry, air hot and moist. In addition, cold causes a descending movement leading to the condensation of water, while heat causes an ascending movement leading to its evaporation.

(*continued on p. 114*)

1. This correlation is explained in Ibn ʿArabī's *Madkhal fī ʿilm al-ḥurūf* (an unedited text – see, for example, Shehit Ali 1341, 167–73): "Saturn is cold and dry; Jupiter is hot and moist; Mars is hot and dry; the Sun is hot and dry; Venus is cold and moist; Mercury is mixed; the Moon is cold and moist." In addition, the text explains the relation between elements and astrological signs, physical directions, letters, numbers and spheres. "The letters follow the nature of the number, and the nature of the number follows the nature of the sphere." Thus, *alif* = 1 and has the action of the Sun; *bā'* = 2, Moon; *jīm* = 3, Mars; *dāl* = 4, Mercury; *hā'* = 5, Jupiter, *wāw* = 6, Venus; *zāy* = 7, Saturn.

Sphere	Element	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday[1]	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
1. Sun (4th)	fire	***FULL***		FULL[4]	(quarter)	half		half	3.25
2. Moon (1st)	water		***FULL***		(half)	half	FULL	half	3.5
3. Mars (5th)	fire	FULL		(***FULL***)	(quarter)	half		half	3.25
4. Mercury (2nd)	mixed	quarter	two quarters[2] (descent)	quarter (ascent)	(***FULL***)	half	half[3] (descent)	half	3.5
5. Jupiter (6th)	air	half	half (descent)	half	(half)	***FULL***	half (descent)		3.5
6. Venus (3rd)	water		FULL		(half)	half	***FULL***	half	3.5
7. Saturn (7th)	earth	half	half (descent)	half	(half)		half (descent)	***FULL***	3.5
Total units or "hours" of the day		3.25	3.5	(3.25)	(3.5)	3.5	3.5	3.5	24

Notes to the table

1 The autograph gives no details for the individual spheres' effect upon Wednesday, except to say: "God charged the Soul with this compound [of Mercury] and ordered the spiritual realities of the spheres to help the Soul with the strength which they possess as appropriate to this spirituality. There was not a single one of them that did not help, and that is the basis of an immense knowledge." In the *Futūḥāt* Ibn ʿArabī calls this the day of Light, occupying a central position in the week analogous to the Sun amongst the planets (*Fut.* I:155). We may note that Sunday eve (N1), the "solar" night of firstness, is connected to Wednesday (D4) as a "detached" day.

2 The text specifies that "the 2nd sphere helps with one quarter of its strength in descent (*hubūṭ*), and one quarter in the move towards descent (*sayr li-hubūṭ*)." So Mercury, which contains all the elemental characteristics, adds one quarter cold (condensing) and one quarter wet (the precondition for condensation being water) to the day of the Moon (which is cold and wet).

3 The 2nd sphere, Mercury, is described as "helping with the descent" on Friday, the day of Venus (which is cold and moist, like the Moon) – this means again two quarters, one in descent and one in the move towards descent. According to our understanding of the text, this descent also applies to the 6th and 7th spheres.

4 The text states: "… and the 4th sphere helped the Soul with all its strength" (the Sun, hot and dry, helping on the day of Mars, also hot and dry). "It [i.e. 2nd sphere] helped her with a quarter of its strength in various ways, and with its quarter in ascent (*ṣuʿūd*)." In other words, Mercury helps with dryness and rising heat.

The table we have drawn up shows the relation between the individual sphere, prophet, element and the 7 days. As certain information is not made explicit in the text, we have assumed there to be an equivalence between the two fire-planets (Sun and Mars), and the two water-planets (Moon and Venus) on the one hand, and between the cycle of the 7-day week and the 24 hours of the day, on the other. The totals at the end of each row and column represent the "hours" that make up the spiritual "day", with one hour equalling "full" help given to the Universal Soul. The table thus exhibits a perfect symmetry along the diagonal axis of "full" strength.

C

Abjad system

Ibn ʿArabī refers to different versions of the "alpha-numerical" system, which fall into two basic categories: the Eastern and the Western systems. When discussing letters and their numerical value in Chapter 2 of the *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, he mentions that the Eastern version is used by the "people of lights" (*ahl al-anwār*) while the Western is preferred by the "people of secrets" (*ahl al-asrār*). For Ibn ʿArabī this science is a means of direct contemplation, but he does not give it prominence in the way that many other writers, like al-Būnī, have done.[1]

Eastern

The last letter of this system is *ghayn*, which indicates the West (*gharbī*).[2]

This is the system which underlies the selection of letter-prayers for the night in the *Awrād*.

1 *alif*	2 *bā'*	3 *jīm*	4 *dāl*	5 *hā'*	6 *wāw*	7 *zāy*
8 *ḥā'*	9 *ṭā'*	10 *yā'*	20 *kāf*	30 *lām*	40 *mīm*	50 *nūn*
60 *sīn*	70 *ʿayn*	80 *fā'*	90 *ṣād*	100 *qāf*	200 *rā'*	300 *shīn*
400 *tā'*	500 *thā'*	600 *khā'*	700 *dhāl*	800 *ḍād*	900 *ẓā'*	1000 *ghayn*

1. Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Būnī, a native of Bejaia (Bougie) in Algeria (date of death uncertain, but most probably a few decades after Ibn ʿArabī) wrote voluminously on the symbolism and operative powers of numbers and letters. One can also find prayers devoted to each of the letters in his *Shams al-maʿārif al-kubrā* (pp. 363–81, Egypt, no date), but although their style is similar, they cannot be compared in terms of clarity or inspiration with those under consideration here.
2. See *Fut.* I: 71, letter *ṣād*, or 73, letter *sīn*.

Western

The last letter of this system is *shīn*, which indicates the East (*sharqī*).[3]

1 *alif*	2 *bā'*	3 *jīm*	4 *dāl*	5 *hā'*	6 *wāw*	7 *zāy*
8 *ḥā'*	9 *ṭā'*	10 *yā'*	20 *kāf*	30 *lām*	40 *mīm*	50 *nūn*
60 *ṣād*	70 *'ayn*	80 *fā'*	90 *ḍād*	100 *qāf*	200 *rā'*	300 *sīn*
400 *tā'*	500 *thā'*	600 *khā'*	700 *dhāl*	800 *ẓā'*	900 *ghayn*	1000 *shīn*

The same values apply to the abridged versions (*ḥisāb ṣaghīr*) of these two systems, except that the zeros are omitted. Only unit numbers are considered: for example, *'ayn* = 7 in both, and *ghayn* = 1 (Eastern) or 9 (Western).

3. See *Fut.* I: 67, letter *ghayn*.

D

On the meanings of the letters *Alif* and *Wāw*

The following extracts are a series of contemplations on the esoteric significance of the letters *alif* and *wāw*, and give an example of Ibn ʿArabī's complex understanding of the Arabic language. Letters are in themselves a field of Divine manifestation, revealing all the principles that are outwardly displayed in the cosmos. Each letter is accorded a numerical value, which may vary depending on the system used (see Appendix C). It may be written in different forms, according to whether it is joined to other letters or appears on its own.

In terms of sound, the letters are considered as points of articulation where the breath is "stopped", this interruption causing the particular sound of each letter. The letter *alif*, which is the support of the *hamza* or glottal stop, comes from the depth of the chest, without any interruption of its sound. As the sound closest to breath itself, the *alif* is thus a symbol of primordiality. While the letter *hā'* is produced at the most interior point, in the centre of the chest, the letter *wāw* is articulated at the most exterior point of the mouth, where the lips are pursed. Thus the *wāw* is considered to be the final letter in terms of articulation, including the properties of all the other "previous" sounds that can be articulated. The breath has to pass over all these points of articulation in order to reach the "place" of the *wāw*. It thus incorporates and embodies the powers of all letters. For this reason Ibn ʿArabī considers it to be the symbol par excellence of Man in perfection.

The symbolism of the Alif

The letter *alif* is not only the first letter of the Arabic alphabet but also the letter which "unites" all the letters. Its written form is a straight vertical line, which is never linked to any following letter. This verticality stands as the most pertinent symbol of the Divinity. All other letters are curved, or how the straight appears in myriad forms. In sound as well as in writing, the *alif* can be understood as the primordial letter, with all the other letters being its articulations. Likewise, in numerical terms, its value is 1, principle of all numbers.

The first part of the Wednesday Eve prayer is devoted to a meditation on the *alif*. The following extracts from other works by Ibn ʿArabī bring out some of the allusions in the prayer. Ibn ʿArabī calls the *alif* the "self-standing root of the letters" (*qayyūm al-ḥurūf*): "everything is dependent on it, while it is dependent on nothing".[1]

> He said to me: "The *alif* is silent whilst the letters speak. The *alif* is pronounced in the letters, but the letters are not pronounced in the *alif*. The letters are constituted of the *alif*, and the *alif* always accompanies them without them being aware of it." Then He said: "The letters are Moses and the *alif* is the staff."[2]

> If you ask "How did the *alif* come to be the [self-subsistent] principle of the letters?", the answer is that the *alif* possesses a vertical movement, and due to its condition of subsistent Self-Standingness (*qayyūmiyya*) everything stands in existence. Now you might say that the world only comes into existence through horizontal movement, since it happens through "ailment" (*maraḍ*) and this ailment is an inclination [towards the horizontal].

> And don't you see the way that philosophers describe the One who brought the world into existence as the Cause of the causes (*ʿillat al-ʿilal*), whereas the cause [which necessarily entails its effect] is incompatible with the condition of subsistent Self-Standingness? In reply we will say: existence only happens through the self-standing condition of the Cause, and every spiritual reality (*amr*) possesses this

1. *K. al-Alif*, p. 12.
2. *Mashāhid al-asrār*, Chapter 5, p. 50 Arabic text; Twinch and Beneito, *Contemplation of the Holy Mysteries*, p. 56.

> self-subsistent condition. So understand! For the self-subsistent condition of divinity undoubtedly requires the existence of that over which divinity is exercised. "What, He who stands and watches over every soul for what it has earned? And yet they ascribe partners to God!"[3]

The symbolism of the Wāw

Beginning with a consideration of number symbolism, Ibn ʿArabī proceeds to describe the relationship between the Creator and the creation in terms of how the words *kun* ("Be", the Divine Command that gives existence) and *kawn* (the creation which is given existence) are written in Arabic. Turning his attention to the graphic forms of the letter, he relates the *wāw* to the letter *hā'* (as in *huwa* or "He", the Divine Ipseity), finding a symbolic allusion to the essential connection between Man and God. The *wāw* here symbolises the Perfect Man who knows his reality according to the Divine Knowledge. The final section is a meditation on the spelling and internal form of the letter *wāw*, which again shows the fundamental distinction between Creator and created.

This extract presents one of Ibn ʿArabī's expositions on "the secret between the *kāf* and the *nūn*", alluded to in the Friday Eve prayer. The headings are our own, not Ibn Arabī's.

Extract from *K. al-Mīm wa-l-wāw wa-l-nūn*[4]

As for the *wāw*, it is a noble letter with many different aspects and ways of considering it.

Wāw as number

It is the first perfect number.[5] It corresponds [in the alpha-numerical system] to the number 6, whose component parts are: a half which

3. *Fut.* II: 122. The Quranic quotation is from Q. 13: 33. For a fuller discussion of Ibn ʿArabī's doctrine of causality, see *SDG*, pp. 18–19.

4. *Rasā'il*, vol. I, pp. 8–11, corrected with the autograph MS. Veliyuddin 1759 and with Şehit Ali 2813, which carries a *samāʿ*.

5. A perfect number is one which is the sum of its divisors including unity: so

is 3 parts, a third which is 2 parts and a sixth which is 1 part, adding up to a total of 1 whole, which is 6 [parts].

In letter symbolism the *wāw* represents what the number 6 represents for schools of number symbolism, like the Pythagoreans. It is engendered from two noble letters, namely the *bā'* and the *jīm*. The *bā'* [whose numerical value is 2] corresponds to the degree of the First Intellect, which is the second existent, or rather in the second degree of existence. This is the case with all the other written letters, whether isolated or linked. The *jīm* [whose numerical value is 3] represents the first of the odd numbers.[6]

If you multiply the *jīm* by the *bā'* [i.e. 3 × 2], the result is the *wāw* [i.e. 6], which possesses in equal measure the properties and tempers of both its factors. The *wāw* has the properties of the number 6, and it also includes the properties of the numbers 2 and 3. It is a letter which preserves itself particularly.[7] This is why it can be found in the Ipseity (*huwiyya*), [from the pronoun *huwa*, which is made up of the letters *hā'* and *wāw*]. The Ipseity preserves the Unseen and never appears in manifestation. In this respect the *wāw* is more powerful than any other letter apart from the *hā'* [whose numerical value is 5]. The latter preserves itself and others,[8] while the *wāw* only preserves itself. The *hā'* and the *wāw* [together] are the same as the He (*huwa*, written as *h* + *w*), and that is the Ipseity (*huwiyya*).

Kun and *kawn*

The other [letter] which is preserved by the *hā'* is the *kāf* [whose numerical value is 20] of the creation (*kawn*). This (*kawn*) is the

1 + 2 + 3 = 6, and 6 can be divided by 2 and 3. The second perfect number is 28: thus 1 + 2 + 4 + 7 + 14 = 28. The *wāw* has a numerical value of 6 and corresponds phonologically to 28 (as the last sound). The first four perfect numbers were known to the Greeks, and had been described in Arabic by Ibn Sīnā, known in the West as Avicenna (980–1037).

6. Literally, "the stations of singularity", 3 being the first singular or odd number.

7. In other words, 6 × 6 = 36; 6 × 36 = 216; etc. Thus the number 6 is always preserved.

8. 5 × 5 = 25; 5 × 25 = 125; 5 × 125 = 625; etc. Thus the *hā'* preserves the number 5 (= *hā'*) and the number 20 (= *kāf*).

shadow of the Divine Command "Be" (*kun*): the essence of the *kun*'s shadow is the created world (*kawn*), because the light of the Divine Essence shines upon the essence of the *kun*, projecting from it a shadow, which is the creation (*kawn*) itself.

Between the creation and God the Most High lies the veil of *kun* [written in Arabic as two joined letters, *k* + *n*]. The *kāf* is joined to the *nūn*: the *nūn*'s numerical value is 50, which may be seen as 5 in the tens column. In like manner, the 5 ritual prayers preserve the 50 steps of prayer, as is reflected in the hadith transmitted by Bukhārī: "They are five and they are 50, and the word is not changed for Us."[9] In this sense 5 [the *hā'*] is the same as 50 [the *nūn*].

As for the *kāf*, it is only preserved by the *hā'* [i.e. 20 is an offshoot of multiplying by 5]. Although it has apparently become separated from it in the [command] *kun*, in fact it is supported by the *nūn*, which here stands for the *hā'* itself.[10] Its existence is preserved through it [the *nūn*], and through that preservation in the *kun*, the *kawn* is preserved from non-existence. For the imperative *kun* ("Be") cannot bring something out of existence into non-existence, as that would be contrary to its nature, which is essentially to bring into existence, and not to make non-existent …

Wāw in graphic form

Due to its realisation in the *hā'*, the *wāw* was given existence in terms of form according to one of the forms of the *hā'*, whether it be linked or isolated. If isolated, the form of the *hā'* is ه, which is an inverted *wāw*, or like this ھ or like this ه, which would be the head of the *wāw*. Whichever way it is, its graphic form is contained in the *wāw*. How could it not be contained, when the number 6 naturally and necessarily includes 5? When the *hā'* is a

9. This refers to the 50 prayers which God gave to the Prophet for the community, and which were subsequently reduced to 5. There is an equivalence between 5 and 50, in the sense that the same number has been transposed from the column of tens to the column of units. In the abridged *abjad* system, *nūn* equals 5.

10. *Kun* is written as two letters, *k* – *n* (*kāf* – *nūn*), where the second letter is seen as supporting the first.

joined letter, it has two possible forms, and again the *wāw* is present graphically in both: in one form هـ, the *hā'* is only linked to the succeeding letter and the *wāw* appears in its natural position, whereas in the second form ـهـ, it is linked to both preceding and succeeding letters, and the *wāw* appears inverted.

All this points to the intensity of its original spiritual relationship to the Divine Side (*janāb al-aʿlā*). For us the *wāw* indicates Him, and that is what the imam Abū al-Qāsim Ibn Qasī referred to in his Khalʿ al-Naʿlayn.[11] When someone attains knowledge of the secrets of the *wāw*, through it he makes the highest spirits descend in a noble revelation. This [letter] also points for us to the existence of the Divine form in us, according to His saying: "God created Adam according to His Form".

The elements of the letter *Wāw*

Between the two *wāw*s[12] lies the veil of the Uniqueness (*aḥadiyya*), which is the *alif* [first letter of *Aḥad*]. Thus the creation (*kawn* = second *wāw*) appeared in the form of its Creator (*mukawwin* = first *wāw*), while between the two is placed the veil of Most Inaccessible Might and Most Superlative Uniqueness (*aḥadiyya* = *alif*), so that the essences [of the two sides] were distinguished. When you consider creation from the side of the [Divine] Form, you say it is non-existence, since the Form is the "He" (*huwa* = the Ipseity). However, if you consider it from the side of its essence, then you say it is existence. Now nobody knows this except the one who knows what it is that separates the two *wāw*s, which is the *alif*. It is the *alif* which shows you that this [first *wāw*] is not that [second *wāw*].

In the name of the letter *wāw*, the first *wāw* is the *wāw* of Ipseity and the *hā'* [of *huwa*, Ipseity] is implicit in it, just as the number 5 is contained within 6, and so there is no need for it to appear explicitly.

11. Ibn Qasī (d.1151) was an Andalusian Sufi who organised a rebellion against the Almoravids in the Algarve. Ibn ʿArabī met his son and wrote a critical commentary on his book.

12. The name of the letter *wāw* is spelt: *wāw* (*w*) + *alif* (*ā*) + *wāw* (*w*).

The second *wāw* is the *wāw* of creation (*kawn*). The *wāw* appears in both the creation (*kawn*) and the Creator (*mukawwin*), or the Ipseity (*huwiyya*) if you prefer. The *wāw* is also in that which lies between the Ipseity and the creation, which is the *kun* ("Be"): yet here it is invisible.[13] It is hidden because of the nature of the Divine Command. For if it had appeared in the Command itself, then the creation would not have manifested, for it has no capacity to witness the Ipseity and the reality of Ipseity would have disappeared. The Ipseity [the One who is absent and unseen] is completely opposed to witnessing [which implies presence and visibility], since He is the Absolute Unseen [or Absent One].

[Note: we can represent Ibn ʿArabī's explanation in the following way:]

Witnessing (*shuhūd*)	Uniqueness (*aḥadiyya*)	Ipseity (*huwiyya*) Unseen (*ghayb*)
و	ا	و
WĀW	*ALIF*	*WĀW*
كَوْن	كُنْ	مُكَوِّن
Creation (*k–w–n*)	"Be" (*k–n*)	Creator (*m–k–w–n*)

13. It is not visible as a letter but appears as the vowel *ḍamma* (= *u*), which has the same graphic form as the *wāw*.

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How can I know You when You are the Inwardly Hidden who is not known?
How can I not know You when You are the Outwardly Manifest, making Yourself known to me in every thing?

(Sunday Morning prayer)

Ibn ʿArabī (1165–1240) has long been known as a great spiritual master. His many works of prose and poetry are beginning to be more accessible in translation in Western languages. They possess the remarkable quality of being able to speak to people of all walks of life and belief, across the apparent barriers of many centuries and different cultures. Despite this growing interest, the prayers that are attributed to him remain little-known. They provide a most precious glimpse into the real practice of the mystical life within the Sufi tradition. This is the first time that any of Ibn ʿArabī's prayers have been published in another language.

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